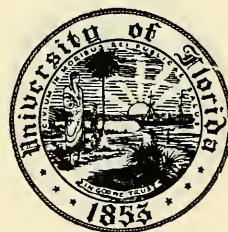


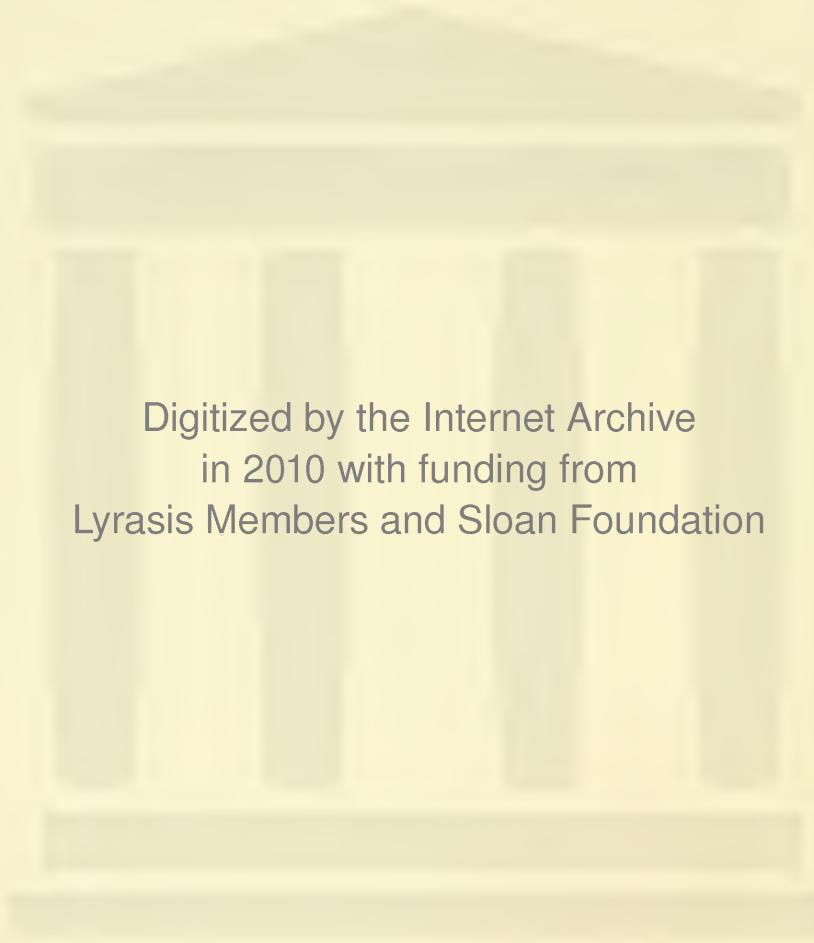


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VOLUME I

THE HISTORY OF  
PHILOSOPHY

JOHANNES HIRSCHBERGER

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## PREFACE

### THE NATURE AND THE VALUE OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

#### 1. THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AS A HISTORICAL SCIENCE

The history of philosophy is both a science of history and philosophy; it links two different fields of endeavor. As a science of history it seeks to acquaint us with the wealth of thought bequeathed by the philosophers of the past and of the present. For this reason it provides us with whatever is known of their lives, their works, and their systems. In so doing it not only portrays what once actually existed but also, by developing the notions and the thoughts that have been or are current, seeks to make accessible to us a knowledge of this rich heritage. This is accomplished by examining the origins of both the men and their works, by placing them in their proper relation to greater spheres of thought, by correlating them with other contributions and with the all-pervading spiritual and cultural currents among peoples of various eras, and finally by unfolding for us the fundamental suppositions and the ultimate assumptions from which the concepts, the problems, and the teachings of philosophy have originally sprung as from a matrix.

Should the history of philosophy attempt to present things as they were in reality, it would by that very fact determine for itself a definite method: on the one hand, a continuous use of sources; and, on the other, a demand for objectivity or freedom from bias. The use of sources is a special achievement of the modern science of history. Antiquity and the Middle Ages had to be content with only second- or third-hand reports. Today, however, we not only consult the sources but we also ascertain with critical and painstaking diligence whether the writings which appear under the name of a certain philosopher actually stem from him, whether his manuscripts have been preserved without falsification, and in which period of his creative ability they were written (textual criticism and chronology). The history of philosophy is therefore an introduction to the works of the philosophers themselves. We strive to be objective in our his-

torical presentation by taking great pains to report what was actually said and in what sense it is actually to be understood, without viewing the matter through the colored spectacles of a subjective viewpoint. We may not, for example, read into Plato a Neo-Kantianism or into Aristotle a blossoming Scholasticism. Without a doubt, an absolutely unprejudiced state of mind probably has never existed and probably will never exist, since every scientific thinker is a product of his times and he personally cannot play fast and loose with the conventions of his own age. In particular, he will judge everything brought into his purview by his own philosophy of life, by his own peculiar evaluations, and by his own assumptions, of which he himself is perhaps not consciously aware. This fact does not, however, lead us to the conclusion that we must forego all impartialities in thought, all freedom from bias, as an impossibility. We must rather hold to objectivity as an ideal of which we can be certain, as we are of every ideal, that it can never be fully realized. But we must be determined to keep this ideal always before us and calmly strive after it; in fact, we should consider it our never ending task to achieve it, and we can approach its realization more closely by being ever ready both to learn and to discuss the findings of our investigations. Whoever seeks after the truth and does not spare himself in its pursuit can certainly expect to discover it.

## 2. THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AS PHILOSOPHY

Is the history of philosophy only a history of error? The history of philosophy is also a true and real philosophy. It is not, as some uninformed individuals have incorrectly supposed, a history of errors. Rightfully and manfully did Hegel refute a conception of the history of philosophy that made of it "a disorderly aggregation of opinions." Profound thinkers are fully aware that the history of philosophy is an arduous and honorable search for truth. Not only is it an honorable search, but it is a constant one as well, possessing inner continuity.

Or the truth in its entirety? But neither is it true that such a history is, as Hegel, who falls into an error at the other extreme, so boldly states, "a system in evolution." It is not a presentation of the gradual and progressive self-revelation of the mind and of truth, in which everything follows so logically that we may anticipate the shape of things to come from what has gone before, just as in a textbook of geometry one proposition is developed from the preceding,

and thus page by page geometrical truth unfolds for our delight. The history of philosophy is indeed both a growth of the spirit and a piercing of its secrets,\* but the way it takes to reach this goal is neither direct nor always logical and not always objectively determined. Alongside the milestones of truth there are also detours of misunderstanding, the wrong roads of error, and the disturbing crossroads of chance. Just as political history is not always a historical process of objectively necessary actions, but a narrative in which a dictator's will to power or the caprice of a mistress has described its course, so chance plays a role in the history of philosophy as does everything irrational which springs from the subjectivity and from the freedom of the individual who philosophizes. Whatever kind of a philosophy a man proposes depends, as Fichte has said, to a great extent upon the kind of a man he is. Not a few philosophical problems can be shown to trace their origin to the personal contradictions manifest in the life of the philosopher or in the rivalry of the schools then in existence. Just as we cannot boldly state that the history of philosophy is a history of errors, so we may not maintain that it is truth itself. Such a statement would not be true even if in a modern variation of the Hegelian concept we interpreted the totality of truth as philosophical existence. Up to the present, philosophy has not considered itself merely as an active existence, but it has always purposed to discover theoretical truths, not simply "truth"; and it must continue to do so in the future.

**Self-revelation of the human mind.** The matter is somewhat different when we inquire into the nature of precisely what the history of philosophy adds to actual philosophy. Once we pass the barriers of personal, temporal, and spatial limitations by means of knowledge that we have acquired of the opinions of others, we are liberated from the thraldom of many subjective presumptions and approach more and more closely to the consideration of truth *sub specie aeterni* (under the appearance of eternity). As Rickert says, "Only through the study of history can we rid ourselves of history." Through the history of philosophy we arrive at a historically grounded critical analysis of human reason. The instruments of the human spirit, its methods of

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\* The original German text has "Zu-sich-selbst-Finden des Geistes," which is a technical term in Hegel and must be interpreted strictly. By it Hegel meant the mind that was awakening and moving toward maturity — the mind which in the beginning did not know or understand itself, but finally in the course of the maturing process became conscious of itself (*Translator's note*).

appraisal, its notions, the tendency of its ideas, the problems, the hypotheses, and theories reveal its essence and its capabilities only after centuries have passed. Often man has wrestled with problems for decades, in fact for centuries, only to discover at last that they have in their fundamental notions been incorrectly propounded from the very beginning. On the basis of many such factual experiences we must always reckon with the possibility that false premises have obtruded themselves in our thinking. Notions such as repose and motion, continuity and discretion, matter and form, sensuality and spirituality, body and soul, to mention only relatively few, today have developed into subject matter for the most subtle discussions. Are we always conscious of the fact that in the gray dawn of antiquity these problems were first discussed and developed on the basis of material that today can no longer prove what it had proved then? Yet these notions still retain their original meaning. H. Poincaré once wrote:

In general we know that a skillful arrangement of flinty fibers forms the skeleton of certain sponges. When the organic matter disappears, all that remains is a fragile and ornamental tissue of spicules. In reality these are nothing more than a siliceous material; but what is most interesting is the form which this material has assumed. We would never have been able to understand it, had we not known the living sponge which had imprinted upon it precisely this form. Thus it is with the ancient intuitive notions of our forebears, which, even though we abandon them now, have imprinted their forms upon the logical framework of ideas which we have substituted in their place.

Devoting ourselves to the history of philosophy, we are enabled to delve to the root of things relating to the purpose and the worth of our thinking faculties: notions are being purified, problems are correctly stated, the way to the heart of the matter is being cleared. With this advance the history of philosophy becomes of itself a criticism of knowledge and thereby constitutes philosophy in the full meaning of the term.

**Historicism.** For this reason the history of philosophy need not fear the reproach of historicism. In past decades it may have been guilty of what the learned designated as Alexandrianism: the bringing together of museum pieces of thought which originally represented knowledge, but not wisdom, because such a collection merely meant stoking the mind with historical ballast; the results for systematic philosophical knowledge of problems were not evaluated. However,

if we consider the history of philosophy as the self-reflection of the human mind, this danger no longer exists and we are actually brought face to face with true philosophy; for we are then enabled to advance to the objective systematic solution of philosophical problems themselves. But embarking upon such a solution without the foundation of sound historical philosophy is not seldom reduced to a mere tilting with windmills *Don Quixote* fashion.



## CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Preface . . . . .                                       | v   |
| <b>PART I. ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY</b>                       |     |
| <i>Preliminary Remarks</i> . . . . .                    | 1   |
| <b>Section 1. Pre-Socratic Philosophy</b> . . . . .     | 5   |
| <i>Chapter 1</i> THE PRE-PHILOSOPHICAL PERIOD . . . . . | 5   |
| Philosophy and Myth . . . . .                           | 5   |
| 2 FROM THE MILESIANS TO THE ELEATICS . . . . .          | 9   |
| I. The Milesians and the Pythagoreans . . . . .         | 9   |
| II. Heraclitus and the Eleatics . . . . .               | 18  |
| 3 FROM THE MECHANISTS TO THE SOPHISTS . . . . .         | 29  |
| I. The Mechanists and Anaxagoras . . . . .              | 29  |
| II. The Sophists . . . . .                              | 40  |
| <b>Section 2. Attic Philosophy</b> . . . . .            | 47  |
| 4 SOCRATES AND HIS CIRCLE . . . . .                     | 47  |
| Knowledge and Value . . . . .                           | 47  |
| 5 PLATO—I: ON THE GOOD AND THE TRUE . . . . .           | 61  |
| The Good . . . . .                                      | 67  |
| The True . . . . .                                      | 76  |
| 6 PLATO—II . . . . .                                    | 99  |
| Man . . . . .   | 99  |
| The Republic . . . . .                                  | 112 |
| The World . . . . .                                     | 121 |
| God . . . . .   | 127 |
| The Old Academy . . . . .                               | 132 |
| 7 ARISTOTLE—I: KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE . . . . .          | 134 |
| Writings . . . . .                                      | 136 |
| Knowledge and Science . . . . .                         | 139 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 8 ARISTOTLE — II: BEING AND BEINGS . . . . .                                    | 158 |
| 9 ARISTOTLE — III: ETHICS AND POLITICAL<br>THEORY . . . . .                     | 198 |
| The Good and the Community . . . . .  | 198 |
| The Older Peripatetics . . . . .  | 213 |
| <br>Section 3. The Philosophy of Hellenism and of the<br>Roman Empire . . . . . | 215 |
| 10 THE STOICS . . . . .   | 217 |
| The Philosophers of Stoicism . . . . .  | 217 |
| Logic . . . . .   | 219 |
| Physics . . . . .   | 223 |
| Ethics . . . . .  | 227 |
| 11 EPICUREANS, ACADEMICIANS, AND PERIPATETICS . .                               | 245 |
| I. Epicureanism: An Ancient Philosophy<br>of Life . . . . .                     | 245 |
| The Philosophers of Epicureanism . . . . .                                      | 245 |
| Logic . . . . .   | 246 |
| Physics . . . . .   | 249 |
| Ethics . . . . .  | 253 |
| II. Academy and Scepticism . . . . .  | 258 |
| The Middle and the New Academy . . . . .  | 259 |
| Pyrrhonic Scepticism . . . . .  | 261 |
| III. The Peripatetics . . . . .   | 262 |
| 12 NEO-PLATONISM: A PHILOSOPHY AND A RELIGION . .                               | 265 |
| The Preparation for Neo-Platonism . . . . .                                     | 266 |
| Neo-Platonism . . . . .   | 270 |

## PART II. MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <i>Preliminary Remarks</i> . . . . .                               | 281 |
| <br>Section 1. Philosophy of the Patristic Period . . . . .        | 289 |
| 13 YOUTHFUL CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTS ANCIENT<br>PHILOSOPHY . . . . . | 289 |
| 14 THE BEGINNINGS OF PATRISTIC PHILOSOPHY . . . . .                | 298 |

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
| 15  | ST. AUGUSTINE, TEACHER OF THE WEST                                      | 310 |
|   | Truth . . . . .   | 313 |
|   | God . . . . .   | 318 |
|   | Creation . . . . .  | 321 |
|   | The Soul . . . . .  | 325 |
|   | The Good . . . . .  | 329 |
|   | The City of God . . . . .   | 334 |
| 16  | FROM BOETHIUS TO THE END OF THE PATRISTIC PERIOD                        | 336 |
|   | Boethius, the Last Roman . . . . .                                      | 336 |
|   | Boethius and the Middle Ages . . . . .                                  | 337 |
|   | Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite . . . . .                               | 346 |
|   | The End of the Patristic Period . . . . .                               | 351 |
| <b>Section 2. The Philosophy of Scholasticism</b> |   | 353 |
|   | <i>Introduction: Scholasticism in General</i>                           | 353 |
| 17  | EARLY SCHOLASTICISM   | 357 |
|   | I. Origins . . . . .  | 357 |
|   | II. St. Anselm of Canterbury . . . . .                                  | 360 |
|   | III. Peter Abelard and Mediaeval Subjectivism . . . . .                 | 364 |
|   | IV. The School of Chartres and Mediaeval Humanism . . . . .             | 370 |
|   | V. Mysticism . . . . .  | 373 |
| 18  | THE DAWN OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCHOLASTICISM                             | 375 |
|   | Introduction: The New Forces . . . . .                                  | 375 |
|   | The Reception Accorded to Aristotle . . . . .                           | 375 |
|   | The Universities . . . . .  | 383 |
|   | The Orders . . . . .  | 384 |
|   | I. The School of Oxford: Mathematics and the Natural Sciences . . . . . | 384 |
|   | II. The Older Franciscan School: The Men of Augustinianism . . . . .    | 389 |
|   | III. St. Albert the Great, The Universal Doctor . . . . .               | 394 |

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 19 | ST. THOMAS AQUINAS — I: EPISTEMOLOGY AND<br>GENERAL METAPHYSICS . . . . . | 400 |
|    | Knowledge . . . . .   | 405 |
|    | Being . . . . .   | 411 |
| 20 | ST. THOMAS AQUINAS — II: THEODICY,<br>PSYCHOLOGY, ETHICS . . . . .        | 426 |
|    | God . . . . .   | 426 |
|    | The Soul . . . . .  | 431 |
|    | Morality . . . . .  | 439 |
|    | Law and the State . . . . .   | 445 |
|    | The Reaction to Thomistic Aristotelianism .                               | 449 |
| 21 | FROM THE AVERROISTS TO MASTER ECKHART .                                   | 452 |
|    | I. The Faculty of Liberal Arts and the<br>Averroists . . . . .            | 452 |
|    | II. The Younger Franciscan School .                                       | 457 |
|    | III. Master Eckhart (1260-1327), Mystic<br>and Scholastic . . . . .       | 463 |
| 22 | LATE SCHOLASTICISM: FROM OCKHAM<br>TO CUSANUS . . . . .                   | 473 |
|    | I. Ockham and Ockhamism . . . . .   | 473 |
|    | II. Nicholas of Cusa . . . . .  | 481 |
|    | Index of Names . . . . .  | 495 |
|    | Topical Index . . . . .   | 505 |

# THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY



# PART I

## ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

We may ask ourselves why we should study ancient philosophy in this modern world. A query of this kind, touching as it does the value of ancient philosophy, can be disposed of in one sentence: Ancient philosophy has given to mankind the spiritual heritage upon which Western philosophy still nourishes itself. Considered merely on a quantitative basis, ancient philosophy can lay claim to one half of the intellectual history of Europe, for it stretches from 600 B.C. to A.D. 600. Of greater weight even than the quantitative is the intrinsic and qualitative value of this philosophy. Ancient philosophy never becomes antiquated. When reading mediaeval authors, we find Aristotle quoted more frequently than any contemporary writer. Platonic, Neo-Platonic, and Stoic concepts are included among the fundamental ideas which support the ideology of the Middle Ages. The essential ideas of modern philosophy and of scientific thinking today trace their origin to antiquity. Notions such as principle, element, atom, body, spirit, soul, matter and form, potency and act, substance and accident, being and becoming, causality, wholeness, meaning, purpose, notion, idea, category, judgment, conclusion, proof, science, hypothesis, theory, postulate, axiom — all were developed by the Greeks. We would use them blindly and without due appreciation, if we should not study their sources and their original meaning. We are, moreover, indebted to ancient philosophy not only for individual basic notions, but we owe it our gratitude also for the essential philosophical branches such as logic, metaphysics, ethics, psychology, and cosmology which it formulated and developed. In addition, antiquity saw the development of the most diverse systems of phil-

osophic thought: idealism, realism, scepticism, materialism, sensualism, and their hybrids. With such an understanding we are able to piece together the reasons why E. Hoffmann was able to conclude a chapter on "Greek Philosophy Considered as Past and Present" with the sentence: "It will be shown that in Greek philosophy the fundamental ideological possibilities of thought were thoroughly developed, the problems which are still valid first propounded, and the various methods of solving them, methods which we still pursue, offered to the world."

## DIVISION

In order to obtain an overview of the various epochs, we will divide ancient philosophy into four periods. The first of these covers the time before Socrates, and for this reason it is called the "Pre-Socratic Period." This is not represented in its essentials in Greece itself, but in the Greek colonies, in Ionia, lower Italy, and Sicily. The chief element is a philosophy of nature. Only later, when Sophism appears, does man himself become the object of philosophical speculation and a problem to be solved. The second period may be entitled "Attic Philosophy," because during it the motherland itself begins to philosophize. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are the leading thinkers, and in them Greek philosophy reaches its zenith. The whole array of philosophical problems—nature, morality, state, spirit, soul—all are treated with identical intensity. The flowering of philosophy corresponds to that period in Greek history when politics dominated the world scene in the era of Pericles up to the reign of Alexander the Great. The third period, the so-called "Philosophy of Hellenism," lies between the time of Alexander's rise to power and the downfall of the successor states, that is, between 300 and 30 B.C. In this era we find the philosophical schools as the centers of attraction: the Academy, the Peripatos, the Stoa, and the garden of Epicurus. The fourth period embraces the "Philosophy of the Age of the Emperors," dating from the middle of the first century to A.D. 529, at which time Justinian closed the Platonic Academy at Athens, confiscated its property, and forbade all future philosophizing in Athens. This period is no longer creative; it rings the knell of all that had preceded.

## SOURCES

In ancient philosophy we are confronted with the special problem of sources. The essential works of a great number of philosophers

have been preserved. Thus we have most of the philosophical writings of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Philo, Cicero, Seneca, and Proclus. Of others we have only fragments or the doxographical reports of their pupils and later followers. Much material of this kind can be found in Aristotle, Theophrastus, Athenaeus, Aelian, Diogenes Laertius, Stobaeus, and many others. The most important parts of this material have been evaluated for us in four outstanding and definitive scientific works: H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (5th ed., Berlin, 1934–1935; translated into English by K. Freeman); H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (1903 ff.); H. Usener, *Epicurea* (1887); O. Kern, *Ophicorum fragmenta* (1922).

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Indispensable for any scientific study of Greek philosophy is Überweg-Praechter, *Die Philosophie des Altertums* (12th ed., Berlin: Mittler, 1926). Besides many other valuable works on this period, of special value are: H. von Arnim, *Die europäische Philosophie des Altertums* (*Kultur der Gegenwart* I, 5, 2nd ed., 1923); Cassirer-Hoffmann's presentation of ancient philosophy in Dessoirs, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie* (1925); J. Stenzel, *Metaphysik des Altertums* (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1931); W. Kranz, *Die griechische Philosophie* (1941); W. Jaeger, *Paideia, The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 3 vols. (2nd ed., New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945); H. Meyer, *Geschichte der abendländischen Weltanschauung*, Vol. I (1947).

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## SECTION 1. PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE PRE-PHILOSOPHICAL PERIOD

### PHILOSOPHY AND MYTH

#### 1. IDEA OF MYTH

On the threshold of Greek philosophy stands something which in itself is unphilosophical—the myth. A myth is the belief of a community concerning the great problems of the world and of life, of gods and of men; it lays down exactly what the people are to think and to do. Drawn from popular traditions, a myth is accepted without reflection, gullibly and blindly. But as Aristotle himself remarks, a philosopher is in a special sense a friend of the myth, because in it he will find problems which are the problems of the philosopher. For this reason, whenever Aristotle presents the historical status of a philosophical problem and the attempts that were made to solve it, he always mentions by preference the opinions of “the very ancient” who “at the very beginning theologized.”

#### 2. THE MYTHOLOGY OF HOMER AND HESIOD

Here we must mention first of all Homer and Hesiod and their teachings concerning the lineage of the gods (theogony) and the origin of the world (cosmogony). According to the mythology of Homer, the cause of all becoming should be sought in the sea-gods, Oceanus and Thethys, and also in the water by which the gods were accustomed to swear and which the poets called Styx. In Hesiod, the original founders of all things are Chaos, Ether, and Eros. But in these mythologies other problems are also touched upon: the transitoriness of life, the origin of evil, the question of responsibility

and of guilt, fate and necessity, the life after death, and similar problems. In the solution of such problems there is always manifest a thoroughly imaginative speculation which intuitively experienced concrete reality with the perceptive eye of the poet and, by generalizing its intuition, transferred its data to life and to the world, and thus interpreted the whole of being and of act.

### 3. ORPHIC DOCTRINE

In the sixth century before Christ a new mythology descended upon Greece from the mountains of Thrace. At its center we find the god Dionysus; its priest is Orpheus, the Thracian singer and wonder-worker. Nietzsche was later to make of Dionysus a symbol of life and of acceptance of life in all its sublimity and depths. Dionysus, the god of wine, was truly a god of life, namely of productive nature, and was venerated in the bacchanalia in a riotous earthly fashion. The teachings of Orpheus, however, denote something radically different from a mere acceptance of and assent to life. In him we find a curious mixture of asceticism and mysticism, the cult of the soul and the longing for an afterlife—problems broached in a manner alien to the thoughts of Homer's contemporaries. The soul is no longer blood, but a spirit; it originates in a world different from this; it is banished to earth as a punishment for an ancient crime; it is chained to the body and must wander with it until redeemed from its carnal desires. The way to arrive at purification is through a series of food prohibitions: laws forbidding, for instance, meat and beans. Gold fillets, which were placed with the dead in their graves, were to be ocular proof that the soul "rose pure from the pure" and had succeeded in escaping "from the onerous circle of births."

The views of the Orphic school on the fate of souls after death are reflected in the great eschatological myths, in the Platonic Dialogues of *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*. The Orphic doctrine possessed at an early stage a well-rounded theology and cosmogony. According to it, Chaos and Night were present in the beginning. As understood by the Orphics, Chaos denotes literally a yawning abyss or chasm. The Night begot an egg, the world egg, and from it proceeded winged Eros. "And he paired with the yawning chasm the winged, shadowy, far distant Tartarus, contrived to free our race and to lead it into the light. Previously there had been no race of immortals, until Eros united all things; as he bound one thing to

another, there arose the heavens and the ocean and earth and all the gods of an immortal generation." According to a still later source, the origin of the Cosmos was a dragon with the heads of a steer and of a lion; in the middle of the two it bore the countenance of a god and, on its shoulders, wings. This was known as the never aging god of time. The dragon begot a threefold seed, moist ether, the boundless yawning chasm, and cloudy darkness, and in addition another world egg.

All this is fanciful, poetical intuition. The scholar sees in Orphic mythology "palpable" Oriental tradition. The dualism of body and soul, this-worldliness and otherworldliness, and in general the transitory nature of life-forms are "a drop of strange blood" in Hellenism. The original hearth of such concepts may actually have been India, where such ideas appear in the Upanishads, the theological commentaries of the Vedas. They also may be found in the religion of Zoroaster on the tablelands of Iran, as can be shown from the oldest Gathas of the Zend-Avestas. In any event these ideas are part of the Aryan heritage.

#### 4. MYTH AND LOGOS

Still more important than the question of the origin of these notions is the question of their survival. Aristotle correctly informs us (*Meta.*, III, 4) that these notions were not science, because the ancient "theologians" handed down only the traditional wealth of thought; they did not advance proof of their assertions. He draws a sharp line of demarcation between them and those "who use the language of proof" (*οἱ δὲ ἀποδείξεως λέγοντες*), and from whom we can, therefore, expect genuine "convictions." By such expressions he understood the philosopher. In stressing the decisive and methodical moments of doubt, of proofs, and of argumentation, he distinguishes between myth and philosophy, although we must not forget that at the very beginning he had granted that a friend of the myth was in a certain sense a philosopher. Philosophy, in contrast to the then customary myth, was truly something novel. With philosophy the individual no longer lives on the spiritual riches of the community, but he is taught to rely on himself; and by himself he must freely and with mature deliberation discover truth for himself, all the while investigating and evaluating what he determines and holds to as true. Naturally this approach is entirely different from that employed by the myth. We may not, however, forget that the problems of the

myth, as well as its notional intuition which originated in the gray dawn of uncritical antiquity, persist in the philosophical language of today. In this respect it is the task of epistemology to examine whether or not the supposedly rational intellectual faculties employed in philosophy are all actually trustworthy.

# CHAPTER 2

## FROM THE MILESIANS TO THE ELEATICS

### I. THE MILESIANS AND THE PYTHAGOREANS

#### MATTER AND FORM

The cradle of Greek philosophy was Ionia, on the coast of Asia Minor. It is in Miletus, Ephesus, Clazomenae, Colophon, and Samos where we meet up with the majority of the pre-Socratics. For this reason pre-Socratic philosophy is sometimes termed Ionic philosophy. The chief interest of this group centered, as has repeatedly been pointed out, on the problems of nature. As a consequence it has also been called a philosophy of nature. The consideration of nature was exceptionally pronounced, but it would nevertheless be more correct to speak of its metaphysics rather than its philosophy of nature. Discourses of these pre-Socratics on the primary causes and elements suggest in general the principles of being. Through the development of such ideas, the essence of being as such is clarified; their ideas are not offered merely as an explanation of the ultimate material constituents of natural bodies.

#### THE MILESIANS

Miletus opens the roundelay; it gives us the first three pre-Socratics: Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes.

##### 1. THALES OF MILETUS (c. 624-546 B.C.)

Antiquity regarded Thales as one of the seven wise men. Aristotle canonizes him as "the father of philosophy" (*Meta.*, I, 3, 983b 20 [*The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. by R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 693]); and Plato tells us the story of his meeting with the Thracian maid-servant who is supposed to have laughed at him because, while meditating on some abstruse reality, he fell headlong into a ditch and picked himself up wet

and muddy. Here was a man who proposed to teach mankind sublime truth, but who was so blind that he could not avoid an open ditch. Is this an omen for the whole race of philosophers? Thales was, however, not at all impractical. In Miletus he guided the destiny of a nautical school, built a canal to funnel off the waters of the Halys, and delivered many a sage piece of political advice.

**Water as Archē or First Principle.** And what of his philosophy? Aristotle tells us: The majority of those who began to philosophize busied themselves with primary causes (*ἀρχαί, principia*) in the realm of the material. These causes constitute the original essence (*οὐσία*) of all things; from these they would arise and into them they would return. They would therefore be the elements (*στοιχεῖα*). Every particular entity would be merely an action, a suffering, an “undergoing” (*πάθος*) of this original essence. Concerning this primary cause, the *Archē*, individual thinkers up to this time had entertained different opinions. Thales had discovered that this principle was water (see *Meta.*, I, 3; ed. McKeon, p. 693). Why especially water? Aristotle himself did not know for sure. This is, however, not very important.

**“Wisdom.”** The original contribution of this Milesian is rather his notion of the primary cause of all being, proposed by Thales for the first time in the history of philosophy. Aristotle has said of metaphysics (*Meta.*, I, 2; ed. McKeon, p. 691) that it concerns itself no longer as a special science with aspects of being but with being as such in its entirety, that it seeks after the primary causes, and that by such an attempt it ventures into a hitherto hidden and difficult field and fosters knowledge pursued not for any practical purpose but solely for the sake of knowledge itself. This is precisely what Thales attempted to do. As a consequence he did not consider his science to be ordinary knowledge, but wisdom, metaphysics, and philosophy. Was his an impractical undertaking? Perhaps it was the most practical undertaking inaugurated in the name of all knowledge. For human beings, be they average citizens or specialists in scientific pursuits, who do not wish to dabble directly in philosophy, fashion mental pictures and form concepts which embrace the whole of the world and of life. Without such reflections they would be unable to face the world or to initiate any project or to control their feelings. Ordinarily they do this only by fits and starts and without method. That Thales provided the impetus to put such reflections into scientific form makes him in fact the father of Western philosophy.

**Hylozoism.** With the statement, water is everything, we must combine still another postulate of Thales, namely, everything is replete with the divinity, filled with the gods. By such a thesis we need not think that Thales made a formal confession of pantheism or monism, although such expressions might naturally suggest such errors. On the contrary, from this expression of his subjective opinion we may draw the conclusion, as the ancient philosophers were inclined to do—of this we shall see sufficient proof later—that the world is to be interpreted in terms of man; that is, the world must be arranged in various categories, which men draw up specifically from their own lives. The “gods” of Thales are only superhuman beings, “demons,” as he himself declares. We realize this especially when Thales explains that the magnet has a soul, that is, life, because it attracts iron. Only by and through life can Thales understand an attraction being exercised by metal.

This so-called hylozoism is less a typical opinion based on a philosophy of nature than it is a hypothesis grounded on a theory of knowledge. In it we are dealing with an interpretation of being in anthropomorphic concepts. As Stenzel points out, “A living thing is still a basic category of all being.” These ancient thinkers attempted to keep God and the world, life and the body, distinct one from another, but they were unable to complete the separation. Are we ourselves able absolutely to carry it to completion? The attempt is repeated throughout the whole history of philosophy, and the difficulty of maintaining a real distinction is constantly evident. In evaluating these problems we must always keep before our eyes the fact that the ancient positions in regard to them still exercise some influence over contemporary thought.

## 2. ANAXIMANDER (c. 610–545 b.c.)

He also lived in Miletus, almost contemporaneously with Thales. To him we owe the first philosophical writing of Western civilization. His work bears the unostentatious title: *On Nature* ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\phi\acute{\iota}\sigma\epsilon\omega\acute{\iota}$ ). This title does not signify a philosophy of nature understood in the modern meaning of the word, but, in general, philosophy or a metaphysics, just as the physical treatises of Aristotle are actually metaphysics. Anaximander kept alive his contacts with the special sciences as did Thales before him. He is credited with having drawn a map of the world, with fashioning a globe of the heavens, and with inventing a sun dial.

**Apeiron or the Boundless.** In his determination of the principle of being he embarks upon a different approach than his predecessor. According to him *Archē* is Apeiron (the Primary Principle is the Boundless) which we can take to mean either indefinite *unbounded* infinity or infinite indefiniteness, because by it we understand not only a logically imperfect limitation, but also a spatially and temporally infinite, eternal, and omnipresent matter. By such a concept Anaximander envisages the principle of being more universally than Thales. This was only logical, for when a person fixes upon an ultimate cause which may be verified in all being, it must be as indeterminate and indefinite as possible, so that it may become all to all. Anaximander, as a consequence, carried out the process of abstraction to its ultimate conclusions. He prescinded entirely from the particular and thus arrived logically at his concept of the Apeiron. He advances further along the path that Thales had first opened, but perhaps he proceeded too far, for that which is entirely unbounded and entirely indefinite cannot be anything real and cannot, therefore, explain reality. Truly, then, indefiniteness cannot be an *infinitum*. In this respect the logical order is mistaken for the ontological order. If we could think of the Apeiron as a thing, even though this thing were only a very diaphanous and tenuous material substance, which is perhaps what Anaximander had in mind, then it would no longer be a true Apeiron.

**Formation of the World.** The teaching of Anaximander on the formation of the world reveals a comprehensive and deep searching gift of observation. From the Apeiron have stemmed progressively the antitheses contained in it: warmth and coldness, the moist and the dry. In the separation there arose also an infinite number of worlds together with their contents. These "worlds" are already conceived as "cosmos," as we can recognize quite clearly in the symmetrically arranged cosmogony of Anaximander.

To him the earth is a cylinder whose diameter is three times as great as its height. Around it revolve at a distance  $3 \times 3 = 1 \times 9$  of the earth's radius the sphere of the stars; at  $2 \times 9$ , the sphere of the moon; and at  $3 \times 9$ , the sphere of the sun. Upon our earth, which was originally a fluid, the process of "separating out" proceeded in much the same fashion as that by which living beings were formed out of the moisture. They were at first surrounded by a thorny rind; these rinds were torn apart and there emerged the new forms. Man himself owes his origin to originally primitive forms. His immediate ancestors had been fish which formerly lived as sharks in the ocean,

but when they had developed to the extent that they were able to exist outside the water, they climbed out of the water to dry land. This is the first intimation of a theory of the descent of species! All these infinitely varied worlds were conceived of by Anaximander as living beings, as demons, and as gods; this is again an ancient form of anthropomorphism rather than hylozoism and pantheism.

To see all contraries reconciled in an original or fundamental first principle and to evolve and to explain variety from it is one of the greatest ambitions of the history of philosophy. We will meet with it again in Plato, Plotinus, Eriugena, Nicholas of Cusa, and Hegel. Anaximander must have been an outstanding thinker.

### 3. ANAXIMENES (c. 585–528 B.C.)

Anaximenes was a pupil of Anaximander. He considered the air to be the *Archē* or Primary Principle. The high degree of abstraction evidenced in the Apeiron of Anaximander is again lowered, perhaps to rescue reality from annihilation. All things originated out of the air through the process of solidification and of dilution (*πύκνωσις-μάρωσις*). “Disturbed the air becomes fire; solidified, wind; then clouds; further, through still greater solidification, water; then the earth, then stone; everything else traces its origin to this” (Diels, Frag. 13 A 5\*). At the same time the air again appears as something living and as something divine. This all lies in the direction which we have followed in connection with Thales and Anaximander.

## THE PYTHAGOREANS

With these we turn our gaze from the east to the west of Greece. But the connection with the Ionians remains unbroken, for Pythagoras himself came from Ionia. He was, however, born in Samos. Under the heading of Pythagorean many widely divergent ideas are brought together in the ancient narratives, and so we must first of all clarify the external history of the Pythagoreans.

### 1. EXTERNAL HISTORY

**Pythagoras.** Pythagoras was born in Samos in 570 B.C., migrated when about forty to Croton in Lower Italy where he must have

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\* The source of the quotations and the reference to ideas contained in the following pages are taken from Diels, who performed such a noble work to make them better known (*Translator's note*).

enjoyed his greatest activity, and moved finally to Metapont where he died about the year 496 B.C. Heraclitus confessed that "he knew more than all other men," but called him the "forefather of all swindles." This sharp criticism may have had its origin in the antithesis evident in their peculiar philosophies of life. The author of the statement, "everything is in flux," could not be bothered with a world of eternal truths such as a kingdom of numbers offers. In much the same fashion Nietzsche would later on characterize all idealism as "a sublime swindle." Plato, on the contrary, declared: "Pythagoras was greatly beloved for his wisdom, and (his) followers are to this day quite celebrated for the order which was named after him" (*Rep.*, 600b; trans. of B. Jowett in *The Dialogues of Plato* [New York: Random House, 1937, 2 vols.], Vol. I, p. 857). We know nothing more definite about Pythagoras. His personality has become shrouded in legend. He is not thought to have written anything. But he gathered around himself a coterie of followers, after the fashion of a secret order (league, society, or brotherhood) who embraced in a conservative manner the theories of the master and repeated them orally. This brotherhood was arranged on philosophico-scientific and religio-ethical lines with a very strong ascetical strain. From the intellectual outlook maintained by this order, we may in retrospect conclude that Pythagoras was drawn by Orphic dualism, adopted the metempsychosis of the Orphics, fostered comprehensive scientific interests, and personally must have possessed a pronounced moral and political flair for leadership.

**The older Pythagorean brotherhood.** The brotherhood that Pythagoras himself founded and guided in Croton, we call the "older Pythagorean brotherhood." To it belonged the famous physician Alcmaeon of Croton, who had discovered that the brain was the central psychic organ, as well as the astronomer, Philolaus, who taught long before the beginning of the new era that the earth did not occupy the center of the universe. In the second half of the fifth century this brotherhood, which manifested a decided aristocratic mental attitude and enjoyed great authority, was dissolved by the democratic party of Greece, but was revived soon thereafter.

**The younger group.** The "younger Pythagorean brotherhood" had its headquarters in Tarentum and existed there until the end of the fourth century. The members of this group and only these are designated by Aristotle when he speaks of the "so-called Pythagoreans" in Italy. In this group we must keep separate two distinct

tendencies: on the one hand, the "akusmatiks" or the "Pythagorists" who clung conservatively to the traditional rules of life and followed them quite ascetically. They abstained from meat, fish, wine, and beans, refused to bathe, held culture and science in low esteem, and led a life dedicated to wandering and to beggary. On the other hand, the "Mathematicians," who cultivated the friendship of the intellectual aristocracy, esteemed both philosophy and science highly, especially music, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and medicine. Among the members we may number Archytas of Tarentum, whom Plato called his friend, Hicetas of Syracuse, as well as the Pythagoreans Ecphantus and Heraclides of Pontus of the older Academy. These last three taught even in their day that the earth revolved upon its own axis. The Peripatetic Aristarchus of Samos was influenced by Heraclides through Strato of Lampsacus. Aristarchus, as we know, taught not only that the earth revolved on its own axis, but also that it continues to revolve in an ecliptic way—a theory which Seleucus of Seleucia (c. 150 B.C.), who is the "Copernicus of antiquity," then scientifically corroborated.

## 2. THE PYTHAGOREAN WAY OF LIFE

The inner mental attitude of the Pythagoreans led them to adopt a mode of life peculiar to themselves (*βίος πυθαγόρειος*). Its background is the teaching handed down by the Orphics concerning the transmigration of souls: the soul originated in another world, committed sin there, must now, chained to the body, lead a life based upon penance and devoted to pilgrimages, until it finally succeeds in ridding itself of the body and of sensuality and in becoming again truly spiritual. The body is the grave of the soul (*σῶμα σῆμα*). Consequently it is necessary for the individual to embark upon a way of purification. This way of life included the following: asceticism, which involved abstinence from certain foods, periodic silence, a daily examination of conscience (generally at night) on the good and bad actions of the day; intellectual pursuits, particularly philosophy and mathematics, whereby man becomes recollected and spiritual; the cultivation of music, which should develop man's powers harmoniously by its intrinsic harmony and by its conformity to laws rather than give him pleasure by its melody; and gymnastics, which helps the individual bring the body under the control of the soul. An additional characteristic of the Pythagorean way of life was its ideal of friendship and of the brotherhood of all men. This is but a natural

outcome of the culture of the value of the soul and of the spirit. In all this we can discern a strong idealistic concept of life.

### 3. METAPHYSICS OF THE PYTHAGOREANS

**Number; Peras and Apeiron; harmony and cosmos.** In metaphysics the Pythagoreans have won for themselves undying fame because they taught that number is the *Archē* or Primary Principle of all things. By this doctrine they recognized that the principle of being is not to be found in matter, but in form. The number is what gives form, that by which the unlimited is made limited. This is at least what we can draw from the account of Aristotle concerning the Pythagoreans (*Meta.*, I, 5; ed. McKeon, p. 698). Aristotle's account is not entirely unambiguous, but we may safely follow his conclusion, for his statements concerning the ultimate elements of numbers, the limited ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\alpha\sigma$ ) and the unlimited ( $\ddot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\rho\sigma\nu$ ), point in this direction. We have, therefore, two principles, Peras and Apeiron (the limited and the unlimited). The decisive principle is, however, the Peras. This makes number a number and it is henceforth the principle with which the Pythagoreans will attack the problem of metaphysics. "Great, all-perf ecting, all-efficacious, and heavenly, as the ultimate basis and guide of human life, sharing in all, is the power of number . . . without it all is unlimited, confused and invisible" (44 B 11; Diels, Frag. 24).

The observation which led to this thought may have been extremely simple. In music we can appreciate how the different tones have each a definite relation to the length of the strings and especially how the harmonies of the tones are characterized by strong numerical relationships. The frequency of oscillation of the octave is to the keynote as 2:1; that of the fifth as 3:2; that of the fourth note as 4:3. Penetrating and ingenious is the transfer of this theory to the whole of being. As Aristotle says: "They [the Pythagoreans] supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number" (*Meta.*, I, 5; 986 a 3; ed. McKeon, p. 698). This theory was the first impetus given to the discussion of the harmony of the spheres which constantly recurs in the history of thought.

**The great world-periods.** The concept of harmony is strikingly expressed in the Pythagorean teaching on the great world-periods. According to the Pythagoreans, the evolution of the world was not in a straight line but was accomplished in great cycles. The stars

and the universe return periodically to their orbits, and the clock of the world runs ever on, from eternity to eternity. This eternal regress, this everlasting return of all things, extends to even the minutest particles. "I will again stand before you with staff in hand and will again teach you," Pythagoras is supposed to have said. In the doctrine of the eternal cycle of all things we can find the concept of the cosmos developed most sharply. This concept is widened to include all the other realms, psychology, ethics, and the philosophies of law and of the state. "And philosophers tell us that communion and friendship and orderliness and temperance and justice bind together heaven and earth and gods and men, and that this universe is therefore called *Cosmos* or *order*" (*Gorgias*, 508 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 569). The basic cosmological concept with the Pythagoreans is *number*.

How fertile the principle of numbers has been in the history of the mind is shown in the development of the modern natural sciences, which are nourished ever more and more by the theory of number. As Heisenberg said, "The Pythagorean discovery is the strongest impulse ever given to human science. . . . When the mathematical structure is recognized as the essential element in musical harmony, the purposive order of nature, which surrounds us, must be grounded in the mathematical core of the natural law."

The Pythagoreans never taught that all things are sheer number. Narratives which mention that the Pythagoreans looked upon all things as numbers are to be considered as abridged explanations of their theory and are not to be urged too strongly. For the Pythagoreans expressly place the limitant (the *Peras*) alongside the unlimited (the *Apeiron*), with the explanation that wherever form and number are present, there must also be present addition and substance, if number and form are to have any meaning at all.

The Pythagoreans are a necessary supplement and complement to the Milesians. The Milesians always stress the common element that is basic in all things, but overlook the fact that the specific individuality of particular things must also be explained. We should not rest content with investigating solely that of which things are constituted; we must also see what becomes of the prime matter and how this "What" may be explained. These details are supplied by the Pythagoreans without neglecting the former. For the first time they emphasized the form which informs matter.

## II. HERACLITUS AND THE ELEATICS

### BECOMING AND BEING

Thus far the pre-Socratics have directed their investigation to being: What constitutes prime matter from which everything comes? What makes things exactly what they are? The beginning and the end were carefully studied, but the transition, becoming, had not itself been discussed. This problem now enters into the stream of thought and immediately gives rise to a sensational thesis: Becoming, motion, is everything; it constitutes everything that men had to that moment considered as being. When Heraclitus adopted this radical position, he provoked the Eleatics to champion a position antithetically opposed. According to them there is no such thing as becoming and motion, which men perceive everywhere. Since we shall study both these tendencies it will become clearer to us what is actually contained in the problem.

### HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS (c. 544-484 B.C.)

The ancients labeled him "the Obscure." His was not an affable personality. He kept at an aristocratic distance from the masses; for "what do they know or understand? They believe the ballad singers, and for their teacher they take the mob, for they do not know that the majority are evil and only the minority, good" (Diels, Frag. 104). "A single individual has more meaning for me than ten thousand others, provided he is without peer" (Diels, Frag. 49). His teaching is difficult to understand. The fragments and the epigrams that have been handed down to us are rare jewels, flintlike and replete with somber fire.

#### 1. THE THOUGHT OF HERACLITUS

**"Everything flows."** According to Aristotle (*De Caelo*, III, 1; 298 b 30), a basic thesis of Heraclitus was: everything flows; everything is fluid, everything is in the state of flux and nothing perseveres in its unchanged state ( $\piάντα ρεῖ$ ). In the words of Aristotle: "But what these thinkers maintained was that all else has been generated and as they said, 'is flowing away,' nothing having any solidity" (*De Caelo*, III, 1; 298 b 30; ed. McKeon, p. 438). And Plato remarks: "Heraclitus is supposed to say that all things are in motion and

nothing at rest; he compares them to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same water twice" (*Cratylus*, 402 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 191).\* For the water that is there is different from that into which we had first stepped, and besides we ourselves have become other than what we were then. "To be eternally in the state of flux" constitutes the actual or real essence of the world. The *Archē* or Primary Principle is neither water, nor air, nor the Boundless or *Apeiron*, but Becoming. "Neither god nor creature created this world; it has always been, and is and will be eternally living fire, according to its substance at one time flaring high, and at another subsiding" (Diels, Frag. 30). To Heraclitus fire is the symbol for the perpetual unrest of becoming, which is continuous ebb and flow.

**The antitheses.** Becoming is always yoked between two contraditories, and these are the causes which bring motion its fluidity. "The living and the dead, the quick and the dormant, the young and the old are one and the same. When a thing changes, it is 'that,' and when the 'that' changes, it becomes 'this'" (Diels, Frag. 88). To Heraclitus becoming is not a transitory passage of the always new but is an unfolding and display of opposites: "You do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre" (Diels, Frag. 51). "It disperses itself and gathers itself again; it draws near and then recedes" (Diels, Frag. 91). According to Heraclitus, by such a concept the opposite, the antithesis, becomes fruitful and is replete with life and reproductive power, and in this sense we must understand his statement: "War is the father of all things; it is in fact the king of all things" (Diels, Frag. 53).

**Eternal regress.** In the midst of becoming and at the center of all the flux Heraclitus is able to discern order and disposition, purpose and unity. Or would not the opposite tensions of bow and lyre be a unity? Consequently it is not a contradiction and is not something to be wondered at if Heraclitus speaks of the periods of the world which represent the cycle of events, each of which comprises some 10,800 sun years, and signifies the eternal resurrection of all things.

**Logos.** It is equally as little worthy of wonderment when he employs the idea of Logos as one of his basic concepts. To him Logos is that which is common in variety, the measure of self-ignition

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\* What Heraclitus actually said may be found in Diels, Frag. 91.

and self-extinction in the eternal becoming, the one truly divine commandment which rules everything and by which "all human laws are substantiated," that is, receive the force of law (Diels, Frags. 2, 30, 114). To him Logos means also God. In a fashion similar to the theologian from Ephesus, John the Evangelist, who wrote centuries later: "And the Word was God" (*καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*), the philosopher from Ephesus maintained: The one Supreme Being we address as Zeus. The difference was that according to the philosopher the divine coincided completely with the eternally changing universe: "God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, hunger and satiety. He changes, however; just as fire, when it is blended with incense, is named after the sweet odor of both" (Diels, Frag. 67). "Logos" is, in the work of Heraclitus, the universal law which governs change and becoming. The Logos is also the mind of the world. This Logos, however, is not a transcendent personal spirit, but an immanent law that governs change.

## 2. ARISTOTLE ON THE RELATIVISM OF HERACLITUS

In opposition to Heraclitus, Aristotle maintained that if everything is in flux, there could be no such a thing as science and no such a thing as truth (*Meta.*, I, 6; XIII, 4). Naturally our concepts and our scientific judgments are something permanent; they are schemata. If, however, everything is in the state of flux, whatever these seek to represent eludes us entirely, and as a consequence these concepts and judgments become empty terms to which nothing in reality corresponds. "There could be no knowledge of things which were in a state of flux" (*Meta.*, XIII, 4; 1078 b 17; ed. McKeon, p. 894). Is Heraclitus a nominalist? Fragment 102 (Diels) would seem to point in this direction. This states that in the sight of God everything is beautiful, everything is just; it is only men who maintain that some things are unjust, others just. Truly nominalistic are, as a consequence, only those Heracliteans, for example Cratylus, who held to an absolute becoming, meaning thereby that there is absolutely nothing that can be found to be common in all. Such an absolute relativism is represented by the modern vitalist philosophies, e.g., those of Nietzsche and Klages. No matter how often they appeal to Heraclitus, in reality he is not their progenitor, for although all things may be to him in the state of flux, he held fast always to "counter-pulling harmony" (*ἀρμονία*), law, and the Logos. Consequently science is for him still a possibility. In his description of

Heraclitus, Aristotle must have had in mind not Heraclitus but rather the Heracliteans.

How then can we be certain of permanent poles in the continuous flow of appearances? The Eleatics offer us a solution. Their leader Parmenides had heard reports of Heraclitus and his teachings and had busied himself with the problems he had raised.

## THE ELEATICS

Three men brought fame to Elea in lower Italy: Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno of Elea.

### 1. XENOPHANES (c. 570-475 B.C.)

This philosopher was born in Colophon in Ionia. After many years of wandering he finally settled in Elea. Through him this little hamlet became the seat of a famous philosophical school. Xenophanes is an extremely original and independent thinker. His travels had taught him to strike out on his own and to follow no one's footsteps in his speculation. With a critical insight he perceived that the gods of ancient mythology were created according to the image and likeness of man: "The Ethiopians maintain that their gods are black-skinned and flat nosed; the Thracians, blue-eyed and redheaded" (Diels, Frag. 16). This statement represents the first known critical philosophy of religion. The problem upon which it touched is no pettier than the question of a possible recognition of a transcendent God. The first-fruit of such a philosophy is the retreat of polytheism. According to Xenophanes we must conceive of the gods in a different fashion than formerly: "One God, the greatest among gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals, nor in thought . . . he is entirely an eye, entirely a spirit, entirely an ear . . . he abides ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all; nor doth it befit him to go about now hither now thither" (Diels, Frags. 23, 24, 26).

This is no longer polytheism. Is it actually monotheism? More probably such statements must be interpreted in a pantheistic sense, for Aristotle writes: "With reference to the whole material universe he [Xenophanes] says the One is God" (*Meta.*, I, 5; 986 b 24; ed. McKeon, p. 699). Such a view is also contained in the generally pantheistic line of thought with which the pre-Socratics had concerned themselves. And in the "One God who abides ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all," whom Xenophanes describes, we

have thus early an intimation of the “one continuous, coherent and immanent Universe” which Parmenides taught.

## 2. PARMENIDES (c. 540–470 B.C.)

This philosopher was born in Elea. He is supposed to have framed a constitution for the place of his birth. In him as in all the men of those early times we find traces of a very practical view of life. Xenophanes is thought to have been his teacher. But in this case the pupil is greater than the master; he is actually the foremost representative of the Eleatic philosophy. His writings bore the customary title: *On Nature*; they were written in heavy, albeit stately, hexameters. The first part of the poem of which we possess considerable portions deals with the way of truth. This way leads to being; upon this way walk Parmenides and philosophy. The second portion points out the way of opinion; this leads to appearances; ordinary mortals may be found upon this road.

**The way of truth.** 1) “*Being is.*” To understand the way of truth, three principles must be understood: “Being can be spoken of and it can be the object of thought. For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be, namely, being; contrariwise, nothing is nothing,” or, more simply, “Being is that which is” (Diels, Frag. 6, 1). This is not mere tautology; nor is it a recognition of the principle of identity drawn from logic, but simply a polemic directed against the Heraclitean ontology of becoming, resulting from the “contrary road,” the “way of return” (*παλίντροπος κέλευθος*) (Diels, Frag. 6, 9), which refutes clearly the notion of becoming advanced by Heraclitus, one that is involved in contradictions (compare Heraclitus, Frag. 51). Parmenides merely wishes to assert: there is no becoming; there is only being. If ever in our judgments we make use of the expression “is,” by it we speak expressly of being. Parmenides stresses in his exposition the word “being” and thinks of it as the opposite of the Heraclitean “becoming,” which for Parmenides represents “non-being” because it is fluid and does not continue in existence. We realize that in this theory ancient speculation seeks to express itself, a speculation which takes for granted that “being” is something static and possesses the meaning of immobility or repose, just as today uncritical thinkers are accustomed to say: “what is, that is,” and by such a statement attempt to describe a continuously subsisting being.

This includes naturally the concept of identity; logically and

ontologically "being" is something identical with itself, something for which there is neither development nor time. Formally understood, it is the antithesis of the concept of Heraclitus. And this antithesis may stem from the ancient formulation of the notion of being that Parmenides advanced. The explanation that the concept of being has a wider meaning and must include within its extension not only fixity and static self-identity will not be advanced in a clear manner until Plato turns his mind to the subject in his *Dialogues* the *Sophist* and the *Parmenides*.

2) *"Thought is being."* "Thought and being are the same" (Diels, Frag. 3). Or as a parallel passage presents it: "A thought and that of which we think are the same, for not without being, where it is expressed, will you be confronted by speculation" (Diels, Frag. 8, 34f.). His thought does not, as Burnet maintains, express a monism wherein only material being exists and the spirit is nothing individual or special. Nor does it, as Cohen claims, infer that only spirit exists and that matter is but an illusion. Rather, it simply expresses the realistic theory of knowledge possessed by a sound human reason according to which our thinking is a reproduction of the objective world. Thought is identical with being only insofar as it mirrors an object just as a copy mirrors the original masterpiece. By such phrases he does not advocate monism (if we held this we would only be anticipating future developments), but he actually propounds a dualism—a dualism so little infected with doubt that it assumes that the contents of thought are an identical reproduction of the contents of objective reality. In this sense Aristotle offers a further explanation: "To say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" (*Meta.*, IV, 1011 b 27; 7; ed. McKeon, p. 749). In the background hovers the metaphysical conviction that thinking and being are co-ordinate. Being conceived as a continuous state of flux does not, as Heraclitus appeared to assume, escape from the fate of a notion hardened into a mere scheme. The Logos has its antithesis in the ontological order. Aristotle admits this in its entirety when he states that the categories of the intellect may also be categories of reality. The philosophical bearing of this position becomes clear when we represent to ourselves the antithetical position as stated by Nietzsche: "Parmenides has said, one cannot think of something that is not; we are on the opposite side and we say, that which can be thought must be a fiction."

3) *One and all.* "There is a continuous being that is one and all"

(*ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν ἐν συνεχέσ,* Diels, Frag. 8, 5 f.). Parmenides favors a unity in the cosmos in the most radical form. There are not several worlds; being is only one, universal and ubiquitous, and everywhere the same. We cannot partition it into either multiplicity or variety, the individual and the substantial; nor can we perceive various degrees of intensity in it. It is without change and without motion; it knows neither becoming nor dissolution. In eternal repose it lies before us motionless, comparable in form to a well-rounded globe, enclosed uniformly within its own proper boundaries.

The argumentation he employs to prove the impossibility of becoming is extremely interesting: "How could being be destroyed? How could it originate? For if it did originate (or begin), it is nothing; and in like fashion [it is nothing], if it should begin to be in the future. Thus its beginnings are obliterated, and its dissolution forgotten" (Diels, Frag. 8, 19 ff.). This appears to be a play on words, and we are tempted to believe that in it we can detect the first stirrings of the speech mannerisms of eristic, the art of disputation as the Greeks developed it at a later period. But in reality we are faced with archaic thoughts which cannot master the meaning of or give fitting expression to a continued existence both before and after, denoted by the concept of being. Being cannot originate, because for these thinkers being denotes what has always been and always will be. If we should permit something to originate or to dissolve, we would, according to their viewpoint, deny by that very fact being, which we take for granted every time we speak of it, and thus we would become guilty of a contradiction. Finally we would be forced to agree that something originates in something else; then the contradiction would be even more striking. We will find that the same difficulty also confronts Anaxagoras (compare below, p. 38). To clear up the difficulty Aristotle later on introduces the concept of privation (*στέρησις*) and his distinction between potency and act.

Being as propounded by Parmenides, a being which is always the same, motionless and persisting in its eternal repose, offers an effective polemic to the doctrine of Heraclitus who, according to his opponents, recognized only becoming and variety and refused to acknowledge the permanent and the universal. Parmenides was led to develop his strange thesis by his mania for abstraction, which prescinded entirely from any specific determination and consequently resulted in an entirely undetermined something, similar to the Apeiron of Anaximander, only that in his case it was called being. Thus we can explain

both the universal sameness of his being and his denial of multiplicity. The repose which he ascribes to his "being" may be traced again to the ancient assumption that being denotes an existence identical with itself.

Parmenides of set purpose had adopted speculation as the only way to arrive at truth. In his poem he emphatically warns us through a goddess to beware of sense experiences. "Avoid the way of investigation; do not be enticed by the force of well-entrenched habit to take this path. To let the blind eye and the booming hearing and the tongue do as they please; no, decidedly no. Through speculation bring to a decisive conclusion the disputatious examination" (Diels, Frag. 6). This distinction between the experiences of the senses and the knowledge of reason is retained throughout the course of the history of philosophy. Rationalism in manifold guises will always follow the road which Parmenides opened up for the first time. In contrast to Heraclitus, Parmenides had shown the way which led to fixed truths which are always identical with themselves: abstract reasoning. By this advance we arrive at a fixed pole in the continuous flow of appearances. Many reasons led Parmenides to substitute the world of the Logos, of thought, for reality and to arrive at his own peculiar concept of being. First, he failed to realize that all concepts reached by abstract reasoning are only artificial crystallizations and schematizations of artificially stressed aspects and partial circumstances — even though these aspects and circumstances might be basic and essential — of a reality that is far more rich and manifold. Second, he erroneously believed that his world of ideas was the real world.

Those physicists ( $\phi\psi\sigma\kappa\omega\iota$ ) to whom the universal is everything and the particular nothing, who deny all individuality and all plurality, all change, and all becoming, and who permit the world to jell into an eternally unvarying and uniform monotone are called by Aristotle *a-physicists* ( $\acute{\alpha}\phi\psi\sigma\kappa\omega\iota$ ), natural scientists for whom nature no longer exists because they have happily explained away the world — acosmism.

In the same spirit later on Spinoza and Hegel would debase the individual or singular, because to them reality was a "whole" and the individual only "a moment" in the cosmic process and not at all true substance. Only the universal is essential to Parmenides. For Heraclitus it is only the individual that has any meaning. Who is right? What is the true world: the world of the sense which stands in the eternal flow of time but is itself only transitory, a sense world of concrete reality with its multiplicity and its fullness; or the supernal, abstract,

ideational world of the Logos and of science with its pale, although widely valid, universals? And if the essential is to be sought in the universal, in what universal must it then be sought? In the species or in the genus or in some still more sublime universality? If we should be asked to name the essence of an individual dog, what would be more correct to say: This is Fido or This terrier is a dog or This is a living being or This is being? Parmenides held that this last denomination was the more correct. Aristotle ventured his answer to this problem by making a distinction between first and second substance and by this distinction he preserved the rights both of the individual and the universal. Furthermore, by teaching that being is not a concept of genus, because it must be understood not univocally but analogically, he saved the multiformity of being, at the same time making it possible to compare it with others.

**The way of opinion.** But Parmenides does not appear to have been entirely satisfied with his way of truth. In certain respects he concedes that the way of opinion ( $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$ ) may also be valid. Of the portion of his poem which treats of this concession not much is preserved. But from the remnant which we possess we are able to perceive that an opinion exists not through the knowledge of the intellect but through that of the senses. On the basis of the sense faculty arises the image both of becoming and of multiplicity in the world. In reality this image is, however, a deception and the work of the phantasy or "the imagination," as Spinoza will say later when he places his feet on the path first trod by Parmenides. According to Parmenides, sense knowledge is not ideal; nonetheless, the great majority of people—the masses—are content with appearances and with opinion.

As the end result of our study of Parmenides we can draw the conclusion that scientific truth, when it is actually truth, remains eternal; whereas we owe to Heraclitus the view that the actual world, insofar as it is present in space and in time, flows on forever. The former is the world of thought, the latter the world of sense.

### 3. ZENO (c. 460 B.C.)

He also came from Elea and he is thought to have been the favorite pupil of Parmenides. Zeno is the first of a not insignificant number of philosophers who in the struggle for the right of free speculation became the victims of tyranny. His writings bore the usual title: *About Nature*. Eleatic philosophy received from him that

typical form by which it became famous in history and which we designate simply as dialectics or eristic (i.e., pertaining to disputation, controversial).

**Refutation of motion.** Zeno wished to corroborate the teaching of Parmenides that multiplicity and motion do not exist, only motionless being. To do this he advanced his famous four arguments against motion (Diels, Frag. 29 A 25-28): (1) There can be no such thing as movement because in completing it we would have to pursue a definite course. Every course, being a protracted entity, can be divided into an infinite number of smaller distances. To seek to measure a series of an infinite number of parts denotes an endeavor to reach the end of something to which there is actually no end. (2) Achilles cannot overtake a turtle. Until he finally overtakes the lead which it has gained, he requires a certain amount of time; in this interval the turtle has again advanced. Until Achilles makes up for this new progress, the turtle has again moved forward. And thus it continues indefinitely. (3) The arrow shot from a bow is in repose. It moves only in appearance; in reality, every moment it occupies a portion of space. Since "to-be-in-a-place" as "being" signifies, however, to be precisely at rest (motionless), and since the flight consists of an indefinite number of such moments, the arrow is not in motion. (4) All motion is an illusion, for when two bodies move at equal speed in the opposite direction through the same place, they actually travel past a motionless body in this place with a velocity different from that which they had when they passed one another.

**Dialectics.** Comparing these arguments of Zeno with observable reality, we find that they are truly paradoxes. They would establish, as it would seem, that the donkey had no hind legs. For this reason Aristotle recognized Zeno as the founder of dialectics, in which context dialectics has the meaning of disputation (eristic).

**Zeno's assumptions.** Zeno did not deliberately intend to lead us astray by fallacious arguments; he needed only to give assent to the suppositions which entered into his archaic notion of being, oriented as this was more by words than by reality. Since Zeno thought out his concept of being with a vast amount of ingenuity, the following suppositions, three in all, may be found in his writings: (1) The world of thought is also the world of being. The spheres of the logical and the real are mistaken for one another. The infinite number of small parts into which a line to be measured can be divided exists only in thought, not, however, in reality. This is true also of

the infinite number of places momentarily occupied into which the flight of the arrow can be resolved. (2) When he mentions being, we are to think immediately of a positive real quantity of being. Being can, however, denote something negative, for we speak of it in the predication "is." And the lead which the turtle holds in the race is such a negative quantity. Since the Eleatics stick so slavishly to the word "being," they insinuate that the turtle always keeps a positive real distance ahead of Achilles. (3) According to Zeno, being consists of blocks of reality that are immanent and knowable solely in themselves but which we can perceive directly and immediately. It is foreign to the speculation of the Eleatics to hold that speculation can determine a being by various indirect means and from several standpoints, and consequently they refuse to recognize that a quantity of movement can be measured in a variety of ways.

A very special and final problem is the question of the relationship between thought and being. The Eleatics take for granted the theory of images and assume that there is a complete identity between knowledge and the object of the knowledge. From this arise all their difficulties. Many statements of theory will still have to be made before the philosophers arrive at the conclusion that the soul possesses its own set of laws; that it avails itself only of certain aspects and moments of being; that it can often determine being only indirectly; and that it can on occasion bypass and build up a world of pure thought that is alien to reality.

# CHAPTER 3

## FROM THE MECHANISTS TO THE SOPHISTS

### I. THE MECHANISTS AND ANAXAGORAS

Heraclitus and the Eleatics adopted some very extreme positions in the theories which they propounded. It would indeed be strange if in the succeeding decades attempts should not have been made to reconcile the antitheses which had appeared. Such efforts were made; and, as we have already seen in the case of Heraclitus, opposing theories were indeed thought-provoking.

#### THE MECHANISTS

Under this title we bring together three philosophers who are responsible for a new type of philosophy, the theory of Mechanism. From this period on this tendency will continue to find ever new disciples and followers in the history of Western thought. We will better be able to pass judgment on it after we have learned to know its first proponents—Empedocles, Leucippus, and Democritus.

##### I. EMPEDOCLES (c. 492–432 B.C.)

This philosopher came from Akragas, the modern Agrigento in Sicily. He was an extraordinary individual, partly lustral priest, seer, and prophet, partly wandering preacher and wonder-worker, and beyond all this, a politician, physician, poet, and sober scientist. His era looked upon him as a prodigy; like a god he stalked through the world. Considerable fragments of his “Hymns of Reparation” (*Kaθappaioi*) and his work on nature have been preserved. Both were written in verse.

**Elements.** The first problem to which Empedocles sought to reply was the question of the *Archē*, the Primary Principle. Whereas the Milesians recognized only one basic element, he proposed for consideration four original substances: fire, water, air, and earth. These are the four “roots” (*ρίζώματα*) of being. To these four all things

trace their origin by the process of either composition or dissolution. In their quality, however, they are something final; they were neither called into, nor will they pass out of, existence; only particles are splintered from them and enter into new combinations with the particles of other "roots." What men call becoming and dissolution is, therefore, composition and separation. "There is no such thing as a birth among mortal men; neither is there an end in accursed death, but only composition and interchange in the materials that are mixed" (Diels, Frag. 8).

For Empedocles, becoming is merely a change of place. He considered his four "roots" as something both demoniacal and divine; they are named Zeus, Here, Nestis, and Adoneus. The alchemists of the Renaissance called them "spirits," and they reappear in the works of Goethe as Salamander, Undene, Sylphe, and Cobold. The names have indeed disappeared, but the concept, "roots" of being, the notion of "elements"—as we say today—has remained. For it is this concept of elements which Empedocles brought to light in his teaching on the ultimate qualitative constituents of nature. What he considered to be an actual element was not such in reality and although he had no inkling of their actual number, he at least correctly perceived the idea of element. And of equal importance is his second idea bound up with this concept of element, namely, the idea of the eternity of prime matter in the world, or as the moderns have renamed it, "the law of the conservation of matter."

**Love and hate.** Empedocles endowed his matter with force. The original substances, in some fashion or another, must be put into motion. For him this took place by means of two elemental forces, love and hate (*φιλία*—*νεῖκος*). "Two things will I tell you: sometimes one substance coalesces from several elements; sometimes it separates into its component parts. . . . This continuous interchange never ceases. Sometimes all are joined together in love; sometimes the individual substances disunite in the hatred of strife" (Diels, Frag. 17). This could be conceived almost as hylozoism; it is rather an attempt to explain being by taking for its basis certain notions of the spiritual life of man.

**Mechanism.** But this does not give rise to the uncritical anthropomorphism to which we are accustomed in mythology, where the gods meddle in the affairs of the world as pleasure or caprice dictates. The continuous composition and dissolution takes place "alternately," "in the rotation of the cycles," "in the rotation of time"

(Diels, Frags. 26, 1; 17, 29). All this is accomplished by the law which is being itself; it is accomplished therefore by itself; it is accomplished automatically.

**Formation of the world.** The four great epochs of the world alternate regularly with one another in the rotation of the cycles. In the first of these four periods, that of the perfect Sphere, only love (harmony) predominates. Everything is one; there is no separation. In the second period discord interferes; the unity is broken; the elements become divided and multiplicity increases. In this period the worlds arose. We live in this period. Finally discord is conquered, and there is nothing save variety without unity: the third period. But then, in the fourth period, love asserts itself again, and when it finally prevails at the end, unity and harmony will again hold sway. Thus we have again the epoch of the Sphere and with it the whole process begins all over again.

In this account of the cycles of the world it is interesting to observe how Empedocles utilizes the ideas of a vortex, spontaneous generation, and morphological evolution. Insofar as love brings together the separated particles of the elements by means of a vortex, we arrive at the formation of the first heavenly body or sphere. By a further vortexlike formation, the firmament, air, and ether were detached, and by a rotation of the earth, water. Through the beneficent influence of the sun's rays, the first living beings came into existence upon the earth. Their original forms were monstrous; only later did the present forms evolve from them.

**The world of spirits.** Empedocles busied himself not only with the material world but also with the world of spirits or of souls. They should have found a home with the gods. But because of a blasphemy, these souls were hurled down upon the earth and here they must undergo metempsychosis through a long series of reincarnations, until they are again purified (*Kaθαρισμόι*—“cleansed” is the title of one of his books) and liberated from their bodies before they may again enter into the next life. Here Empedocles is propounding Orphic-Pythagorean views.

**Knowledge.** His theory of knowledge is worthy of note. At its core is the thought: we recognize like by like. In sense perception there is a meeting between an element in us and a similar element outside us. “With our own matter we perceive the earth; with our water, water; with our air, divine air; with our fire, the scorching blaze; with our love, the love of the world; and its hatred, with our

own sorry hate" (Diels, *Frag.* 109). What he means by this becomes evident when we recall that we are best able to understand the soul-life of a stranger by comparing it with our own; or if we remember that philosophy requires that the categories of reason and of being must, in a certain sense, be co-ordinated and equated. In the background the problem of the relation between thought and being can be discerned.

The speculation of Empedocles forms an interesting synthesis of the doctrine of Heraclitus and the Eleatics. He tends in the direction of the Eleatic philosophy when he teaches that there is a qualitatively unchangeable being which never became and which is indestructible. His first world epoch in particular is constructed on Eleatic principles. He moves in the direction of Heraclitean thought when he propounds the theory which holds to a continuous composition and separation which for him constitutes becoming and which governs the other world epochs. Despite his constant, unchangeable being, we find that Empedocles insists upon becoming and motion. His attempt to explain becoming as a constantly recurring, automatic happening is novel. In this as well as in the resolution of becoming to a mere local change of primary particles, we can perceive the first beginnings of mechanistic speculation.

## 2. LEUCIPPUS AND DEMOCRITUS (c. 460-370 B.C.)

Ancient documents usually consider these two philosophers as the typical representatives of atomism and materialism. The glamour and the accomplishments of Democritus have entirely eclipsed Leucippus, so that we know scarcely any more of him than his name. Democritus of Abdera, consequently, appears to us as much greater than perhaps he actually was. He is looked upon as a universal genius at least equal in fame and in rank to Aristotle. To warrant such a conclusion we need only examine the long list of his writings on the natural laws, nature, the planets, plants, mankind, the soul, the perceptions of the senses, color, the manifold structure of the atom, the laws of thought, the appulses of circles and spheres, proportionless lines and atoms, numbers, rhythm and harmony, the art of poetry, medical knowledge, agriculture, painting, tactics, the concept of the soul according to the wise men, life after death, etc. In this list we can detect the keen and limitless curiosity of the scholar. Were it not for a group of fragments, all this would have remained unknown to us. Democritus was theoretically a materialist; practically he is one of the greatest

idealists of all times. To be the first to discover a causal link between seemingly disparate happenings would have made him happier than to be the hero who captured the throne of Persia. In such feats he found rest for his soul. His contemporaries dubbed him the "laughing philosopher."

**Being.** 1) *The atom.* The fundamental concept in his philosophy was the atom. For Democritus there was a uniform being without any qualitative differentiation. But this being is no longer a continuous whole. Democritus breaks up the one being of Parmenides into very small particles which are indivisible and are therefore called atoms. Just as Empedocles developed the notion of an element, so Democritus developed the notion of the atom. The atom fills space, is impenetrable and heavy; it is eternal and indestructible. The number of atoms is infinite. It possesses no qualities; all atoms are of the same kind. But there are differences of form (e.g., sickle-shaped, hook-shaped, and spherical atoms) as well as differences in size. The atoms, furthermore, can be arranged in different ways; they can occupy various positions. We can explain the diversity of things by purely quantitative moments.

With regard to the qualities of being, Democritus again moved toward Parmenides. Empedocles too had not admitted qualitative changes in the elements, only a quantitative one, but he had nevertheless taken for granted four different basic elements for the constitution of being. For Democritus as for Parmenides being is uniform; there are no qualitative differences, because the atoms are all alike. In opposition to Parmenides, Democritus did concede other differences, such as those involving quantity and change of place. The atoms possess various forms and different quantities; they differ in size; they constantly shift from one arrangement to another and from one place to another, thereby modifying the objects which are composed of them. We are aware of this change; for example, when the atoms lie close together, they alter appreciably the hardness and the weight of objects.

How, then, are we to explain the various qualities of things of which our sense perceptions make us aware, e.g., sweetness, bitterness, warmth, various colors? Democritus is entirely logical; he maintains that these perceptions are entirely subjective (*vóμω*). Sense perceptions, as they appear to us, do not reproduce objective reality. In the quality of sensation that is experienced in our consciousness, these perceptions are absorbed by our sense organs, which then translate

them into their own subjective language. Only insofar as the senses make known to us differences of quantity (extension, form, mass, heaviness, hardness), are they true to nature ( $\phiύσει$ ). By this Democritus anticipates the differentiation between primary and secondary sensory qualities advocated by Descartes and Locke in modern times.

Has the development of philosophy proved him to be correct in his concept of the atom? No, for we have a list of more than ninety elements and, what is synonymous with this, a like number of different basic qualities of material being. If we should, however, mull over the theory that all elements may be reduced to a nucleus of water atoms and a corresponding number of electrons, we would realize that Democritus, by his theory, had expressed an idea inspired by genius.

2) *Space*. Allied to the notion of the atom is the concept of empty space. This must be taken for granted as soon as the postulate of a single continuous being is denied. Non-being — empty, unfilled space — lies between being that is broken up into particles. This concept is as necessary for Democritus as the atom itself. "What is not" is just as much real as "what is" (Diels, Frag. 156). This empty space is partly in the bodies themselves, because these are of a porous nature, and partly outside the bodies.

3) *Motion*. The third component in the analysis of the world is the conception of motion which Democritus proposes. The atoms move about in empty space. Three things are characteristic of this motion: it is eternal, takes place "violently" ( $\betaίχ$ ), that is, under pressure and impulse, and is self-caused ( $ἀπό ταύτων$ ). Simplicius gives us an account of it: "They contend that the atoms, the primeval bodies, eternally move themselves in infinite emptiness by sheer violence" (Diels, Frag. 67 A 16). And Aristotle asserts: "There are some who make the automaton entirely responsible for the firmament and for all cosmic realities; the vortex arises of itself as does that motion which the universe has, through separation and composition, imparted to the present order of things" (Diels, Frag. 68 A 69). The basis for this concept of the vortex which appears in his speculation as well as in that of Empedocles is a simple observation: "We may observe this in the sifting of seeds and in boulders in the surf; for by the vortex in the sieve the lentils are separated from lentils, barley from barley, and wheat from wheat; in the sea, on the other hand, by the crash of the waves the long stones are brought closer to the long, and the round to the round, as if the similarity of things

exercised a certain unitive attraction over like things" (Diels, Frag. 68 B 164). No matter how simple this observation is, the notion of vortex continues in existence down to the cosmological theories of modern times.

All this is typical of the mechanistic view of the world. Nature is no longer overpopulated by gods as it was in the days of the myths or in the philosophy of Heraclitus; we no longer possess the anthropomorphical categories, as did Empedocles; we do not have any reflection, endeavor, or investigation — only bodies and motion and what is postulated in an *apriori* fashion, namely, pressure and impulse.

4) *Quantitative and mechanistic view of nature.* Automatic happenings do not denote chance, as the Stoics in their criticism seek to allege, if by "chance" we mean lack of causality. On the contrary, everything owes its existence to strict causality exerted by bodies and by the laws which are incorporated in them. Nothing happens without a plan; nothing begins without a purpose; everything originates purposively and under the pressure of necessity, as Leucippus tells us (Diels, Frag. 2). Consequently nature becomes a chain of causes. Since bodies, space, and motion can be measured quantitatively, all the happenings in this world can be examined rationally on the basis of this causal determination. We can verify our calculations and strike a trial balance. The doctrine of the atom propounded by Democritus opened the door for the so-called quantitative, mechanistic study of nature. This in turn laid the groundwork for the modern natural sciences and technical studies and for their subsequent domination of the world. From the time of Galileo Galilei (d. 1642) and Gassendi (d. 1655), the founders of this modern theory, we can trace a line of descent by way of Epicurus and his teacher Nausiphanes, and the latter's mentor, Metrodorus of Chios, back to Democritus of Abdera.

5) *Aristotle's criticism.* The attempt to explain the entire cosmic process by a relatively few notions, e.g., "nature: atoms which lounge about in empty space," as this is propounded in classical conciseness in Fragment 168, is indeed grandiose. Aristotle, however, indicates the futility of such an attempt when he points out that the atomists carelessly forget to explain the source of motion (Diels, Frag. 67 A 6). Simply stating that motion is eternal does not rid us of the obligation of specifying its cause, for not everything eternal is without cause (*Phys.*, VIII, 1). We would, furthermore, soon discover that a still more vexing question could be asked, namely, whether or not mechanistic causality alone is the only type of causality that can be postulated;

whether or not other causes are required in order fully to understand being. And finally it is not difficult to perceive that the theory of Democritus investigates the parts into which being can be resolved, but overlooks the other factors that contribute to its unity. Goethe would say: "You have the pieces in your hand. What you need, though, is the mental bond that brings them together."

**Knowledge.** Democritus believed that the atoms alone sufficed. How completely he was captivated by this principle we can assay from his own assertion that the soul is also composed of atoms. Thought is simply the atom in motion. Naturally, sense knowledge is derived from the images or *eidola* which detach themselves from objects, stream into the sense organs, then meet the atoms of the soul. From the meeting knowledge results. The difference between sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge is only a difference of degree; thinking produces a finer and more rapid atomic motion than does sense perception. In such a theory materialism is very apparent. Nothing else exists in the world save matter; soul and spirit are neither individual nor unique; they are only atoms and atomic motion.

**Ethics.** Matters appear quite otherwise when we examine the ethics of Democritus. His practical rules of conduct are based upon a high idealism. "Anyone who feels himself compelled to perform joyously actions which of themselves are upright and lawful will be happy day and night and will in addition be strong and untroubled. Contrariwise, whoever neglects justice and fails to act as he should will be filled with disgust when he remembers his omissions, and he will taste remorse, and torture himself" (Diels, Frag. 174). "Valiant is he who not only overcomes his enemies, but also he who overcomes his desires. Many are lords of cities, but bondslaves of women" (Diels, Frag. 214). "Do not strive after every pleasure, but only after the pleasure of beauty" (Diels, Frag. 207). His theory of a moral principle does not appear to be in agreement with such statements. For when Democritus asks himself what the ultimate principle of good, what the ultimate essence of good, might be, the answer states: Goodness denotes ultimately pleasantness (*εὐθυμία*) or agreeableness. As a consequence, the Epicureans could press him into service as a forerunner in support of their own theories. All feelings are, as all speculation, merely atoms in motion. In such a concept we can plainly discern anew the materialist, if only in theory. Such a code of ethics fits in very conveniently with Atomism; and the whole—

metaphysics, the theory of knowledge, and ethics—forms a well-rounded and compact system.

### ANAXAGORAS (c. 500-428 B.C.)

Although chronologically earlier, Anaxagoras must be studied after the Atomists. For only then can students fully appreciate the problems that were created by materialism. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae carried the philosophy of Ionia to Athens. This evoked such a reaction among her leading philosophers that he had to undergo a trial on the charge of impiety. For he had theorized that the sun was not a god, only a red-hot stone. Anaxagoras anticipated the sentence that would have been meted out and fled to Lampsacus, where he died, honored by all. When his friends chided him because he was forced by circumstances to die on foreign soil, he is supposed to have replied: "The way into the underworld is equidistant from all points of the compass." His work *On Nature* was sold in Athens, as Socrates tells us, for a drachma.

#### 1. HOMOIOMERIES

**The material of the world.** In Anaxagoras we can plainly detect the efforts which the pre-Socratic philosophers made to solve the problem of being and of becoming. In his writings he offers us an entirely new solution. His starting point is the supposition that it is impossible for anything to arise out of nothing or to be reduced to nothingness. Consequently we should speak not of becoming but of a new composition, not of dissolution but of division. But what is it that is everywhere at the basis of becoming? What is the final constituent element of the world? The solution which he offered was derived from a simple observation. The ideas which are so striking among the pre-Socratic philosophers may usually be traced to just such simple considerations. The Pythagoreans arrived at their notion of harmony by an examination of the relation that exists between tone and the length of a cord. Democritus hit upon the notion of a world-shaping vortex and its formative power by noting the processes involved in the sifting of wheat and in the beat of waves on ocean beaches. Anaxagoras also reflected long and deeply on human nourishment and asked himself: "How can hair grow from non-hair, and flesh from non-flesh?" (Diels, Frag. 10.) From this consideration he concluded that the matter which gave rise to something else must

have been germinally that which it later became. The ultimate elements are "seeds" (*σπέρματα*) and consequently at least qualitatively are in essence like to the finished product; they are homoiomeries (*ὅμοιομερῆ*—of similar parts), as Aristotle so aptly describes them. As for Democritus there was an infinite number of qualitatively homogeneous atoms, so for Anaxagoras there is an infinite number of qualitatively different "homoiomeries," because the essences of finished things are qualitatively infinitely diverse. These "homoiomeries" are eternal, indestructible, and unchangeable. Through the preponderance of a definite qualitative form, every single thing is determined in its own peculiar species. "That of which there is most in a thing, that, as the most clearly recognizable factor, is and was the individual thing" (Diels, Frag. 12).

**Anaxagoras and Democritus.** Anaxagoras assumed a position diametrically opposed to that of Democritus. In the case of Democritus we must deal with a man who is biased in favor of analysis; in Anaxagoras, with one who is prejudiced in favor of synthesis. For Anaxagoras the formed reality alone should absorb our attention, a primacy which Aristotle himself attributed to it. Consequently the homoiomeries must be endowed with form. For Democritus only the unformed, the most universal have meaning, as they do for the Milesians and Parmenides. The question must eventually be developed more fully: Where must the essential be sought, in the universal or in the particular?

## 2. *Nous*

**The world more than matter.** Speculation that is oriented by sensory unities, univocal meanings, wholes, and substances can be clearly recognized in the second cardinal concept of Anaxagoras, his doctrine of the spirit (*νοῦς*) and its role in being and in the formation of being. By it the doctrine of Democritus is essentially augmented and developed. Aristotle has outlined clearly the state of the problem. He writes: "For it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be, or that those thinkers [those prior to Anaxagoras] should have supposed it was; nor again could it be right to entrust so great a matter to spontaneity and chance. When one man [Anaxagoras] said, then, that reason was present—as in animals, so throughout nature—as the cause of order and of all arrangement he seemed like a sober

man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors" (*Meta.*, I, 3; 984 b 11 ff.; ed. McKeon, pp. 695-696). Plato developed this idea in a still more concrete fashion, when he permitted Socrates in prison to question himself: "Do I perhaps sit here because my body is made up of bones and muscles or do I assign ten thousand other causes of the same sort, forgetting to mention the true cause which is that the Athenians have thought fit to condemn me, and I have thought it better and right to remain here and undergo my sentence?" (*Phaedo*, 98, d and e, ed. Jowett, Vol. II, pp. 482-483.) Materialistic mechanistic causality does not, therefore, suffice to explain all reality. There are processes which take place solely because a final or purposive cause is operative.

**Wholeness, purpose, spirit.** Alongside that analytic method of examining being, which is restricted solely to the material elements of being, there is now arranged a synthetic method which is devoted to dealing with univocal meanings, wholes, and continuities of purpose and of order. Such a teleological explanation of being is possible solely on the supposition that there is a principle which is not only logical but also dynamic (*γνώμην . . . ἵσχει καὶ ἵσχει μέγιστον*, "for it has all knowledge about everything and the greatest power"). Anaxagoras finds this principle in a spirit which is at one and the same time the power both to think and to will. His *Nous* or Reason is the source of motion in the universe (Diels, Frag. 12, 13) and also the principle of order. This *Nous* is something infinite, self-ruling, exists for itself, is omniscient, omnipotent, and dominant. Anaxagoras did not, it is true, as Aristotle noted, make a very extensive use of this principle. But we must credit him with certain original discoveries: (1) he described for the first time a new causality, the regulative final or purposive cause; (2) he stressed a new kind of being, the spirit; (3) he specified a new and unique origin of motion. Anaxagoras is the first dualist, even though he did not succeed in separating the spiritual entirely from the corporeal, for to him spirit is still "the subtlest and the purest matter."

### 3. FORMATION OF THE WORLD

What Anaxagoras had to say about the cosmogony is no longer important. In the beginning, when the eternal "seeds" (*σπέρματα*) were huddled together in confused chaos the spirit took hold, begot motion (rotary impulse), and caused a separation of the seeds one from another. In this fashion order was brought into the world

(Diels, *Frags.* 59 A 42; B, 13). But the role of the spirit was not ended by this action. The spirit was not the creator of the world, rather its architect and its builder; but not even this completely, for the mechanistic causes immediately began to exert their power. These causes produced certain effects by rotation; they separated on the one side warmth, dryness, light, thinness, and on the other coldness, moisture, darkness, and thickness. This separation continued until the material world was fully organized and arranged; but this process was and is always mechanistic.

Only in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle do idea and spirit become that power which pervades all things and penetrates the formation of being down to the minutest organism. But it was Anaxagoras, nevertheless, who was the first to treat of the spirit and its activity, namely, the power of reflection and the strength to will.

## II. THE SOPHISTS

### REVISION OF TERMINOLOGY AND OF VALUES

In comparison to the wisdom of the Ionians, the spirit of the Sophists is indeed something quite surprising. Not only because it busies itself with other topics—man takes the place of the world—but also because in its entire essence it is differently expressed. In relation to the ancient world it is like an orator to a savant, a trick artist to an artist, a pettifogger to a lawyer.

### THE SOPHISTS

The first among the Sophists, both in time and in importance, is Protagoras of Abdera (c. 481–411 B.C.). Like all the other Sophists, he too led a wanderer's life. He appeared for a short while in Athens, came into contact with the most influential political personages, and exerted influence over public life. Because of his writings on the nature of the gods, he was summoned for trial on the charge of impiety. While fleeing this tribunal, he died. His work *On Truth* contains the famous dictum: *homo-mensura*—“Man is the measure of all things.” A little younger than Protagoras was Prodicus of Chios (Julis). He was active also in politics. In his book *On Age* the beautiful myth of Heraclitus stands at the parting of ways. A further and still younger contemporary of these figures is Hippias of Elis, a polyhistor, world traveler, pompous orator, jack-of-all-trades, and politician. One of the most renowned names is that of Gorgias of

Leontini (483-375 B.C.), an extraordinarily gifted orator and teacher of rhetoric. He too occupied a prominent place in politics. His disciples were Callicles and Critias, both typical representatives of the school, might be right. The last named, Critias, was a relative of Plato. When the oligarchy seized power in Greece (404 B.C.), he was the ringleader of the Thirty. About the year 427, Thrasymachus became known in Athens. He appears in the first book of Plato's *Republic*. Plato also dedicated Dialogues to Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippias. On the other hand he never mentioned Antiphon of Athens, most of whose sophistic *Fragments* have been preserved.

### 1. POLITICS AND RHETORIC

What objective did the Sophists aim at? They were teachers of virtue, as has often been said. But the *Aretē* of which they often spoke is not virtue, but in its original meaning simply a proficiency, dexterity, or readiness. As used by them it denoted a political proficiency, political dexterity. We are now in the era of Periclean imperialism. This age needed men who are willing to fight and to conquer, prepared to lay siege to the latest frontiers; this age needed men who willed to succeed, who sought to perform great deeds, who aimed to make names for themselves. Sophistry did mean education, as has always been maintained, but only political education and the formation of leaders, not education, i.e., popular education, as we understand it today. The new horizons which the Sophists opened naturally inspired the youth of their day with enthusiasm. So far did these ideas penetrate that it would not have taken much to bring the populace to carry around on their shoulders the men who taught the new way of life.

The means of achieving this goal was speech. But what kind of speech? Naturally it had to be brilliant. The speaker had to be versed in all subjects and he had to be able to speak always on any subject that was offered to him. But the speech also had to be convincing. The art of convincing others was the *Aretē* of the Sophists. How can we convince others? Protagoras replied: The speaker must be able to turn a weak argument into a strong one ( $\tauὸν ἥπτω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν$ ). Gorgias was of the opinion that speech is a poison with which a person can do everything, poison or bewitch. Consequently "conviction" does not serve simply to convey truth, but to accomplish whatever the speaker might desire. Such use does not imply that others are convinced, rather that they are persuaded. The Sophists

called the art they purposed to cultivate "soul guidance" ( $\psi\chi\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\iota\alpha$ ). Plato retorted: Not soul guidance, but soul ensnarement; it is nothing but disputation, word juggling, equivocation, ambiguity, and verbal sham battle. The art is concerned not with objective truth, but with personal subjective interest. Because of this the term *sophistry* acquired a disreputable meaning, one which has persisted throughout the centuries down to our own day.

## 2. THE SOPHIST OUTLOOK UPON LIFE

Is sophistry philosophy? It is not wisdom in the meaning which pre-Socratic metaphysics attached to it; it is also not science in the strict sense of the word. It is not wrong, however, to devote a special section to it in the history of philosophy, although perhaps too much honor was conferred upon it by declaring that in sophistry philosophy turns to man as its subject and deals with great problems in connection with the theory of knowledge and the theory of value. Sophistry recognized no problems; it knew only propaganda. It was not too concerned with philosophical interest; its primary concern was practical aspirations. But we may speak of the intellectual outlook that the Sophists cultivated, for even politicians may hanker after some kind of world view. Behind this outlook there can be discerned, at least indirectly, the looming figure of philosophy. And this "art," namely, to philosophize in a practical fashion in terms of a definite outlook and of a standard of life, produces a greater effect upon the masses than a conscious theory of life, even though the former may be less firmly bolstered by argument and less positive in its conclusions. Furthermore, individual Sophists occasionally took an active part in direct philosophical speculation. Understood in this sense, we may single out two basic concepts in their intellectual outlook: their sceptical relativism and their doctrine of might.

**Scepticism and relativism.** The Ionians had pursued their philosophical thought without being disturbed by any doubt as to the ability of human reason to arrive at truth. But with the Sophists this doubt appears. Protagoras contended that there are no universally valid objective truths. The truth does not depend on the object; objective contents of reality are not taken intentionally into the mind, nor by every mind in the same way; only the subject expresses itself. We can look upon things either in this way or in that. "As the individual thing appears to be to me, so it is for me; as it appears to be to you, so it is for you" (Diels, Frag. 1). By that assertion man

is made the measure of all that should be accepted as truth, as well as for all that should be recognized as value, norm, law, idea, and ideal. "Man is the measure of all things; of those that are, that they are, and of those that are not, that they are not" (Diels, Frag. 1).

1) *Individualism*. What man? Man as a genus or species? Is there here an anticipation of the Kantian transcendental subject? Such an interpretation would be unhistorical, would be a modernization unverifiable in reality. Or a collective man? A group, a people, a race? But this period is too early to entertain such notions; the philosophers had not as yet busied themselves with such subjects of reflection. What is meant is the individual or particular subject as is evident from Fragment 1: as something appears to me to be, so it is for me; as it appears to be for you, so it is for you. But we could prolong such declarations: just as it appears to a third or to a fourth, etc., so it is for them. This denotes an absolute relativism in the field of human reason: in logic, in metaphysics, ethics, esthetics, in jurisprudence, politics, and religion. Such a concept is very fertile for political aspirations. Gorgias himself leaned in the same direction. He proposed three propositions: "Nothing is. If there were something, it could not be known by mankind. And if it could become known, it would not in any case be communicable" (Diels, Frag. 3). Scepticism could not be formulated more precisely than this. There is truly no such thing any more as truth. In the *Theaetetus* (170 a-171 d) Plato will raise a basic objection: Are these propositions which Gorgias advances absolutely true? If not, why does he attempt to voice them at all?

2) *Law*. We meet concretely with relativism in the sloganlike antithesis of "law" and "nature" (*Nomos* and *Physis*). In ancient times *Nomos* was something sacrosanct which obligated both gods and men everywhere and at all times. The Sophists were world travelers. They had come to know by experience the difference between customs and laws, and consequently they ventured the following explanation: *Nomos* is neither eternal nor universally valid; it arose through precept (*θέσει*) and continues to exist through convention; but it is not derived from nature (*φύσει*); it is formulated in Greece in one way, in some other country in still another. A summarized and in another respect worthwhile account of sophistical teaching from a cultural, historical viewpoint concludes with the following sentence: "I believe that if someone (perhaps a great philosopher?) would urge all men to bring together in one place

whatever was improper — what individuals hold to be such — and from this entire mass choose whatever was still proper — what individuals again considered to be such — not a single thing would remain, but all would divide everything among themselves" (Diels, Frags. 90, 2, 18). Thus, Nomos signifies that a thing exists only by reason of law (*νόμῳ*). This leads to far-reaching consequences. Antiphon offers as his opinion: man can transgress against the Nomos, but he should not permit himself to be seen. He considered even national ties as nonentities: all men are to him the same. Hippias of Elis thinks along the same lines (Plato, *Protagoras* 337 c). And Alcidames adds that slaves also have equal rights with free men. Finally, even religious *nomoi* are rather ruthlessly brushed aside: "Concerning the gods I am not able to know whether they exist or not. Many obstacles are in the way, the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of life," contended Protagoras (Diels, Frag. 4). "We have been accustomed to hold as divine whatever was good or useful for man," declared Prodicus. And Critias maintained: gods and religion in its entirety are only inventions of a prudent man who wished to frighten men with terrible phantoms and with demons who were endowed with the power of peering into the secrets of men and of states, so that men would be impelled to obey the laws of the state, even though the police were not present.

3) *Natural law*. But does, perhaps, the other notion, the treatment of what may be valid by virtue of nature (*φύσει*), induce a real obligation? The Sophists indeed recognized a "natural justice" (*φύσει δίκαιον*). After Antiphon went to great lengths to explain that man was not obliged to obey purely human laws, he continued: "Whoever acts contrary to one of those laws which spring from nature as part of ourselves, causes no less damage to himself, even though his act remains hidden to his fellowmen, and no greater when it is known by all, for damage is based not only on opinion, but also on truth" (Diels, Frag. 44). But the question may still be asked: how should we understand the term *physis* (*φύσει*)? Might it be that "which is in conformity with nature," "the natural law," the unwritten divine law that traces its origin not to yesterday or today, but has always been valid, to which man has ever appealed in view of human weakness from Sophocles (*Antigone*, 450 ff.) down to Hugo Grotius? This signifies that eternal law which forms the ideal framework for nature itself according to which the world and man, life and history should develop. Hippias speaks of such an unwritten law

(Xenophon, *Mem.*, IV, 4, 19). Or does there, as Jaeger maintains, lurk behind this concept nothing more than a weariness of law which is disgusted at the many repetitions and contradictory stipulations of party politics and seeks refuge in nature rather than in the caprice of political parties? We could possibly read that into the declaration of Antiphon (Diels, Frag. 44). But when he explains the "natural" by the "useful" (*ξυμφέρον*) we could think, on the other hand, that to the Sophists natural law is essentially identical with desire and is, therefore, *cupiditas naturalis* (87 B 44; Diels, Frag. 34).

**The notion of power.** The second fundamental thought of the Sophists, namely, the discussion of the idea of power, points in this direction. The idea is expressed most forcefully in Callicles and Critias. Callicles develops this thought in the *Gorgias* of Plato: In nature it is apparent that the strong have more than the weak. That is their right; it is a natural right. Only the weak, the masses, slave natures, invent customs and laws to protect themselves. Our educational system and our culture adopt these fictions and with them curb the strong. But let a strong man appear, he immediately seizes power, rides roughshod over conventions, projects himself into the foreground, provides well for himself and his kin, satisfies his desires arrogantly and without restraint, and thus leads a princely existence. This is the naturally just man who is delineated for us (483 d). The natural right no longer denotes a law, only nature; it is individualism and naturalism, because there are no longer any ideal obligations which are superior to nature—only flesh and blood, desires and instincts. This is, however, in reality chaos and anarchy. This may be deduced from the words of Critias, who contributes the historicoevolutionistic theory to support his ideology. There was a primeval state: in that period the life of man was disorganized and animal-like and it was in subjection to brute force. "In that state there was no such thing as praise for the noble, nor punishment for the evildoer; only then, it appears to me, did men frame laws" (Diels, Frag. 25).

In such a theory we discern "the original state" of Thomas Hobbes in which war was waged by all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*), and natural desires (*cupiditas naturalis*) exercised full sway over the human heart while all the inhibitive norms were considered to be artistic inventions, sheer customs, which rested upon convention; just as on the other hand we are able to detect something of Nietzsche, if not in the speeches, at least in the terminology, of Callicles concerning the weak, the masses, the lords of creation, their

arbitrary decisions, their lusts and their instincts, their fuller and better being. From this we are able to conclude that sophistry was not a mere intellectual movement of the past, but a tendency that is capable, even now as it was then, of making fools of men. We might, however, hear the objection: what has already been developed in this section is not sophistry in its entirety. Sophistry as a whole system has contributed much to *ornate dicere*, the liberal arts, humanism, the science of culture, and international politics. The answer to such an objection may be found in Plato's *Phaedrus*: there is much that we consider to be beautiful and great, but in such matters we may easily fall prey to illusion and to false appearances. To be able to grasp true beauty and authentic greatness we must first know what is the true essence of man. To discover this is the task of philosophy, true philosophy. The Sophists, however, never philosophized in the true sense of the word. Appearances and words meant more to them than essence and being. Philosophy must become more profound, must delve ever deeper into the essences of things. This takes place actually in the succeeding era, in Attic philosophy.

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## SECTION 2. ATTIC PHILOSOPHY

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Heights and depths oftentimes in life may lie close together. Perhaps the Greek spirit had to pass through the lowlands of sophistry—through its superficiality, its glib speech, its pulverizing criticism, its relativism, and its scepticism—so that shocked and menaced to the very core, it might react with all the power and the strength that were latent within it. And it was a mighty reaction that sophistry evoked. The men who occupy the center of the stage in this new era—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—bring Greek philosophy to its classical perfection and complete a work upon which we moderns still draw. They occupy themselves in part with the Sophists, but at the same time dissociate themselves from them. The sound of their words reaches far beyond their ephemeral opponents and makes itself heard in the future; it penetrates down to our own era and will continue to reverberate throughout the centuries.

### CHAPTER 4

#### SOCRATES AND HIS CIRCLE

##### KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE

###### SOCRATES

To speak of the Sophists means also to speak of Socrates. Some held him to be a Sophist and, externally at least, he had much in common with them. In reality he was, however, to become their conqueror. In his life and in his speeches it is clear that for him there are objective, universally valid truths and values.

## SOCRATES THE MAN

Socrates was born at Athens, c. 470 B.C. His father was a sculptor, his mother a midwife. Gainful occupation as such did not interest him, only philosophy. He was not, however, a philosopher of the old Ionian school. For him man is the proper subject of thought, man for whom both truth and value are to be found in reality. Socrates himself wrote nothing. Instead of writing books he cultivated a living philosophy. He spoke to all whom he encountered. And he always touched upon the same topics. Whether men were clear about themselves (Do you know yourself?), whether they knew what truth was, and in what knowledge consisted; and whether they had examined and understood the worth of the individual man. People speak and speak about philosophical matters. Socrates listened to the words they used and asked: How do you mean this? Exactly what do you understand by that? How would you prove this? Have you realized and considered well the conclusions to be drawn from what you have already said? Are they in accord with the universal assumptions which you used?

Over and over again he discovered that men knew nothing. This was his art of examination, his elenctic or *exētasis*. With those who were of good will, this kind of examination usually led to a clarification of hitherto confused notions and to the adoption of a healthier viewpoint. This was his science of "midwifery," his maieutic, the "method of learning through doing" as we would say today. This art or science he learned from his mother, as he was accustomed to say. He always left his audience with the impression that they had not by any means exhausted the subject and that they had not by any means attained the perfection of virtue. He said even of himself: "I know that I know nothing." But this was his irony. It succeeded in disturbing and at the same time spurring his listeners to greater efforts. His irony was his best educative tool in dealing with his fellow men.

To be sure, those who held fast to traditional methods of procedure felt annoyed at Socrates and became indignant at his everlasting criticism. And they soon began to avail themselves of an ever ready censure, labeling him an innovator and a revolutionary. Even the stage, in comedy, sought to tear him down. Eventually it too was forced to confess: "Hunger never brought him so low as to make a flatterer of him" (Ameipsias). Socrates was indeed trouble-

some, but he was a person not easily daunted. Xenophon recounts his bravery in the face of the enemy and lauds his endurance of the winter cold. Plato describes his ability to remain sober throughout an entire night of carousing. Throughout the Arguis trial he clung to his own personal opinions in defiance of an enraged mob, and when the Thirty Tyrants demanded his assistance in a political assassination for reasons of state, he refused point-blank, although by doing so he endangered not only his own position but also his life. But the hatred and the baiting of his enemies did not wane. And ever in the background lurked the lurid figure of politics. Socrates had been a friend of Alcibiades. Consequently, in 399, politicians arraigned him on the charge of impiety, alleging that he corrupted the youth of Athens and had sought to introduce new gods. He could have escaped from prison, but he refused because his inner voice, his *daimonion*, deterred him; he did not wish to be unfaithful to the trust that had been imposed upon him by the Delphic god: to subject himself and his fellow citizens to the acid test of fidelity. "Men of Athens," he said in his own defense, "I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength, I shall never cease from the practice and the teaching of philosophy, exhorting anyone whom I meet and saying to him after my manner: You, my friend—a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens—are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all" (Plato, *Apology* 29 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, pp. 412-413).

He was nevertheless sentenced to die. He drank the hemlock in peace and with resignation, philosophizing to the very end with his friends on the immortality of the soul. Plato has erected an immortal memorial to him in his *Apology*, in *Critias*, and *Phaedo* as well as in the Alcibiades speech in the *Symposium*.

Socrates was philosophy itself come of age. He had philosophized not only with his intellect but also with his flesh and blood. In him we learn concretely what truth and value are. His philosophy was existential philosophy.

#### SOURCE PROBLEMS

The chief sources of our biography of Socrates are Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle. The higher the value we place on one source

than on another and to the degree to which we express a preference for one to another, the biography of Socrates receives a specific interpretation and is given a definite cast. Consequently the various lives of Socrates differ from one another, as, for instance, those by Joel, Doering, Maier, Busse, Burnet, and Stenzel. The main difficulty arises from the fact that Plato, besides idealizing the portrait of his master, oftentimes ascribes to him his own thoughts; as a consequence, it is extremely difficult to differentiate between the Platonic and the historical Socrates. In fact it would seem that absolute certitude about the historical Socrates can no longer be obtained. It is still possible, however, to attempt an examination of the collected sources with a careful and exhaustive scrutiny and through it to try to present a well-rounded and authoritative account of his speculative and ethical achievements. The following presentation is, we hope, a step in that direction. In our analysis we can pick out one or two problems from a mass of confused traditions. Upon these the entire speculation and the entire activity of Socrates focus: The question of knowledge and the question of values.

## 1. KNOWLEDGE

**Universal ideas.** The position which Socrates took in relation to knowledge is admirably summarized in the words of Aristotle: "There are two things which we must ascribe to Socrates: the one 'inductive arguments' (*ἐπακτικοὶ λόγοι*) and the other 'universal definitions' (*ὅριζεσθαι καθόλον*)" (*Meta.*, XIII, 4; 1078, b. 27; ed. McKeon, p. 894). Experts have thought that in the *ἐπακτικὸς λόγος* (inductive arguments) the student of philosophy can discern inductive reasoning and inductive proof. This construction and this interpretation are not entirely incorrect, but they do express a typical modern nuance to the extent that, by the notion of induction understood in this sense, opposition to all rationalism and apriorism is expressed—a view which is actually not fully solved in the mind of Socrates. His formation of universal concepts has a much greater significance, as Aristotle explains in the *Topics* (I, 18); put simply, it means: In arriving at knowledge we start with concrete individual instances of experience, study these individual cases in their singularity, but by so doing, we encounter something always the same in each of the instances, and thus we pick out and stress that which presents the same characteristics. In this process we arrive at the universal idea. In dozens of cases Plato has given us samples of this Socratic procedure and

by them confirms the correctness of Aristotle's assertion.

Socrates, for example, investigates *Aretē* (virtue). His friends answer his questions by saying that *Aretē* exists when a man is able to rule a republic, to be helpful to his friends, and to be a scourge to his enemies; or when an individual is brave, considerate, prudent, etc. His retort to such replies is always the same: These are nothing more than examples of *Aretē*; they are only single virtues and not virtue in general. Examine these individual instances, and you will soon discover that there is always something the same at the basis of all of them. "And so of the virtues, however many and different they may be, they all have a common nature which makes them virtues" (*Meno*, 72 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. 1, p. 351). Over and over again the reflections (*λόγοι*) of Socrates move in this direction, so that we may say that the "inductive argument" (*ἐπακτικὸς λόγος*) means the speculation and investigation which precede and are responsible for the formation of the universal idea. By the universal *eidos* or form thus gained, Socrates conceives all reality and life itself. In this his "universal definition" (*ὅριζεσθαι καθόλον*) consists: it is an outlining, a bounding, a determination of the particular with the help of the universal.

**Idea and reality.** Socrates conceives the world not by means of the plastic art of poetical imagination or of the concrete fullness of eternally evanescent images, but by means of the universal standardization made possible only by sober, pallid, systematic thought. This results naturally in an impoverishment of the concept of the world. But at the same time it affords us two distinct advantages. In the first place, our understanding becomes a deepened understanding. The universal is not something transitory, unimportant, but something that is always, that always exists. Consequently it is something essential to reality, that by which the truly virtuous (*Aretē*) is really *Aretē*, the truly virtuous. In the second place, by such a concept he possessed in his universal idea sure knowledge. To him the universal does not denote a representation which appears here in one way and there in another, but it forms a content of knowledge which everywhere represents reality with the same permanency and with the same value, no matter who conceives it. And this universal is not invented by, or recognized from, moods and subjective views, but it is discovered in the reality of which we have experience. By such speculation Socrates overcame the relativism and the scepticism of Sophistry.

As we can perceive, Socrates was formally interested in knowledge. Aristotle expressly tells us that Socrates never philosophized about nature in its entirety as had the Ionians. These philosophers had busied themselves with the materials of knowledge; Socrates was concerned with methodological and logical problems: how may we arrive at genuine and certain knowledge? In this sense, Socrates is a modern philosopher.

## 2. VALUE

**Against the morality of hedonism.** Socrates adopts quite a contrary position in the problem of value. In this the material aspect is, for him, most important. He sought to discover what the good, particularly the morally good, considered from the standpoint of content, actually is. As a consequence, for him the problem of value is an ethical problem. In solving it he had to perform first of all what might be termed a negative task. He had to clear away false notions concerning moral good. When his era dealt with the problem of value, it did so with the help of the notions of good (*ἀγαθόν*), of proficiency, of virtue (*ἀρετή*), and of happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*). These notions were capable of a threefold interpretation. The term "good" could be understood in the meaning which utilitarianism ascribed to it, namely, the useful, the serviceable (*συμφέρον, χρήσιμον, εὐφέλιμον*), or in the meaning which hedonism gave it, namely, the pleasant, anything that suits the inclinations and desires (*ἡδύ*), or in the meaning which naturalism had attached to it, to wit, the superiority and the might of rulers (*πλέον ἔχειν, κρείττων εἶναι*).

Of these notions utilitarianism and naturalism do not offer the correct or final solution because the serviceable or the powerful usually are subservient to a superior purpose. What this purpose was for the epoch of Socrates, especially among the Sophists, as well as for the majority of the people, can be defined as anything that results in well-being or produces pleasure. For this reason men strove after the useful as well as after power. The final answer may be found, as a consequence, only in the philosophical system of hedonism. With this "ism" Socrates had to carry on a persistent battle. How he waged it we can deduce from the discussion relative to the problem of value which he carries on with Callicles, as this discussion is described for us by Plato in the *Gorgias* (488 b-509 c). In this lengthy debate, Socrates leads Callicles step by step in his reasoning processes until the latter reaches the point and actually perceives and concedes that

a reasonable person cannot give assent to every inclination. Otherwise the desire for vulgarity or for baseness would also have to be given the stamp of approval, for example, the desire to scratch which a person may experience when he suffers from eczema or some kindred skin disease. In such circumstances the individual thus afflicted could scratch himself his whole life through without feeling the desired relief. To this Callicles agreed, and so Socrates made a distinction between good desires and base desires (or lusts). By so doing he administered the deathblow to hedonism, for desire and inclination are no longer recognized as the final principle of the morally good. A new criterion is proposed, a criterion which is superior to desire, and a criterion which is divided into good and bad.

**The good as knowledge.** What is this new criterion? Socrates now had the task of propounding positively in what the essence of ethical value actually consisted. In the Dialogues which Plato wrote in his youth, we can perceive that his answer was ever this: We should be wise and understanding (*σοφός, φρόνιμος*). In the Dialogue entitled *Laches*, bravery; in *Euthyphro*, piety; in *Charmides*, prudence; in *Protagoras*, virtue in general are said to be knowledge. "The person who knows is wise, and the wise man is good" is concisely broached to us and convincingly proved in the first book of the *Republic* (350 b). This fits in with what Aristotle had to say, for according to him Socrates was of the belief that "all virtues were forms of reason; they consist in prudence" (*Nic. Eth.*, VI, 13).

Some have labeled this interpretation of the notion of moral value as intellectualism. What does this mean? The ethics and pedagogy of the age of rationalism inscribed this "Socratism" on their banners and considered that the statement "virtue is knowledge" was a convertible judgment of identity, and for that reason concluded: "Knowledge is virtue," and avowed that they were capable of educating all mankind (especially to virtue) simply by imparting knowledge and inculcating rationalism. In the past century certain thinkers believed that they could express the thought of Socrates more clearly by using the terms "noocratic" and "ideal knowledge." "Reason" and "knowledge rightly understood" would necessarily lead the individual to perform the good action. More recently Stenzel proposed another interpretation. He suggested that "the knowledge" which Socrates envisioned pierced to the core of reality and by so doing permitted a mysterious, magical attraction and grace to flow from out the substantiality of reality that drew us into the systematic order of the

universe around us and thus became a substitute for the activity of the will.

All this is, however, unhistorical and represents a typical modern interpretation of notions that were characteristic only of ancient thought. Actually this supposed intellectualism of Socrates is no intellectualism in the modern sense of the word, but is simply a term which is used by Greek philosophers when speculating on *Technē* or artistic activity. Socrates avails himself of examples drawn from the realm of *Technē* or art, whenever he proposes a solution for the problem of ethical value. We read in the *Gorgias*: "Yes, by the gods, you are literally always talking of cobblers and fullers, cooks and doctors, as if this had to do with our argument" (491 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. 1, p. 550). In the field of art knowledge is everything. Understanding (*ἐπίστασθαι*) here denotes both the ability (*δύνασθαι*) and the work itself (*ἔργον*). The wise and able craftsman (*σοφὸς δημιουργός*) is also a good craftsman (*ἀγαθὸς δημιουργός*). Knowledge and value are identical. Even the people of the modern world are accustomed to use the same terminology: "He knows his trade," and by so doing they incorrectly evaluate his ability by placing it entirely on the intellectual plane. This interpretation and this alone is responsible for terming Socratic ethics intellectualism. Ethical states are looked upon as entirely parallel to technical states. Anyone who has learned and understood what it means to build a house is a builder and he builds; and anyone who has learned of and understands a particular virtue, if we push the analogy a bit further, is virtuous and practices virtue. We can readily see how in such a conception the impression might be created that virtue may be taught—one of the many problems which Socrates discussed.

With this as background we can understand another famous statement of Socrates: "No man willingly does evil." Understood literally it would appear as if this statement might be a confession of determinism. But we must examine the context from which it is taken and the connection it has with previous statements to arrive at its true meaning. We are forced to admit that this too is taken literally from the era's speculation about *Technē*. There the statement is in familiar surroundings. If in art something is made incorrectly, it is always because the person who made it possessed neither knowledge nor the requisite ability to create what he had in mind. If he lacks these requirements, he must necessarily make it incorrectly. The compulsion which drove the individual in question to make the

article as he did cannot be traced back to the will that has not been determined in any way, but solely to the fact that the workman did not understand any better the trade he professed: in other words, he could not do better. And only for this reason did he do the act "unwillingly."

**Eudaemonism.** Because of its origin in art, the notion of moral value which Socrates propounded possessed the character of a value of relation. For every notion of art and of artistic value connotes usefulness for a specific purpose. "If you should ask me whether or not I knew of a value that might not be useful for some purpose, I would be forced to reply that I know of nothing of the kind, and I would be forced to confess further, I do not wish to know anything," as we read so significantly in Xenophon (*Mem.*, III, 8, 3). And Plato writes: "We can speak of value, when (we say, for instance) that the eyes are capable of and useful for seeing, the body for running and wrestling and in the same fashion for all living beings. In this sense we have a good horse, a good cock, good quails, good utensils, good instruments for music and the other arts, good activities, good laws, and all other things of the same sort (in other words, we look to the purpose which they are calculated or intended to serve)" (*Hippias Maior* I, 295 c). Thus Socratic ethics under the pressure of its own terminology degenerates into utilitarianism and is allied to welfare morality, as we can see especially in Xenophon. There we find (*Mem.*, 1, 2, 48) that Socrates cultivated the acquaintanceship of young people for the sake of "making them good and industrious, so that they could deal correctly with a household, servants and guests, friends, states, and citizens." If you should wish, as has been customary, to characterize such welfare morality as eudaemonism, you could possibly do so, but only if you explain at the same time that eudaemonism should then be classed as welfare morality, for in itself the notion of *eudaemonia* has a variety of meanings and serves as a vehicle for all possible ethical principles. Even the Stoic ethics made use of the term, although the principles inherent in it had nothing in common with their notion of weal or woe. More correctly we might say that it was hedonism, for whatever in utilitarianism and in welfare morality appears to produce well-being, depends, as Kant has so correctly remarked, upon our appetitive faculties, hence upon desire and inclinations, even if we retain the notion of a Supreme Goodness (*summum bonum*).

Although Socrates, as we have already seen, refused to accept

desire and inclination as ethical principles, and although he taught the self-rule of the wise man — man does not need material goods to be happy, only virtue — we would not wander far from the truth if we conceived Socrates as a utilitarian, a eudaemonist, and perhaps also on occasion a hedonist. But he was such (and deserved such titles) solely because he drew his basic ethical notions not only from the sphere of speculation about *Technē* but from his own individual reflection as well. Actually he aimed at something entirely different: the pure ideal of a realistic ethics. We cannot phrase it more correctly than it was worded in the *Gorgias*: "The greatest of all evils is not to suffer unjustly but to act unjustly." In his own life he embodied something other than utilitarianism and hedonism. Thus there is manifest in himself a contradiction between his personality and his will on the one hand, and, on the other, the world of his own ethical concepts.

But it was precisely this that spurred his greatest pupil, Plato, to speculative heights. Are the ideas of *Technē*, usefulness for specific purposes, inclination, and pleasure, really capable of reflecting or of reproducing the idealism of life and of the will as found in Plato's master? Must we not invent a new language, a whole new set of ideas to express it adequately and to be able to understand it all? In this respect there were indeed certain deficiencies which had to be remedied. If we should overlook the lacunae of the Socratic ethics or if we should hope to correct them artificially in accordance with modern ideologies, we would lose the entire background of problems against which Platonic speculation can be seen to its best advantage.

### THE SOCRATICS

We can best appreciate the uniqueness of Socratic speculation when we survey the circle which grouped around Socrates, the so-called Socratic school. In this examination it becomes apparent that the master was less concerned with handing down apodictic doctrines to his pupils than with encouraging them to philosophize. Especially is it beyond cavil that his discussion of the problem of ethical value is capable of various interpretations and offers no final solution. For this reason the Socratic schools surprisingly enough diverge widely in their development of his doctrines. Among his followers we must distinguish the Megarians, the Elis-Eretrians, the Cynics, and the Cyrenaics.

## 1. THE MEGARIAN SCHOOL

The founder of this school was Euclid of Megara (c. 450–380 B.C.). He sought to bring about a fusion between the Eleatics and Socrates. The one, immovable, unchangeable being of the Eleatics is for him the Good, of which Socrates had always spoken. By this device Socratism took a detour into the realm of metaphysics. The tendency of the Megarian school became better known through Eubulides, one of the oldest pupils of Socrates, through Diodorus Cronus (d. 307), and Stilpo (c. 300). These were the prominent figures in Megarian dialectics, which developed more and more into pure pettifoggery and thrived on fallacy and paralogism. Characteristic of this school is the famed “horned” argument. What you do not lose, you still have. But you have never lost a pair of horns; therefore you still have a pair of horns. Scattered among such sophistry are many worthwhile ideas; for example, the “lordly argument” which has been ascribed to Diodorus Cronus by Aristotle himself. This argument runs as follows: That alone is possible which really is or which really comes into existence. By such argument a shadowy world of possibles no longer exists alongside the world of realities as Aristotle thought, but the possible is only a modality of reality. The school also honored Socrates’ ideal of “autarchy” or self-sufficiency: wisdom and virtue suffice for happiness—an axiom which Stilpo treasured so highly and bequeathed to the Stoa; for Zeno, the founder of the Stoa, was a pupil of Stilpo.

## 2. THE ELIS-ERETRIAN SCHOOL

This school was opened by Phaido of Elis, a former slave who gained his freedom through the efforts of Socrates. From the time of his liberation onward, philosophy offered him the salvation of his soul and the road to freedom. In this school the contact with Socrates appears to have been very close. With Menedem, the entirely rationalistic terminology of Socrates reappears.

## 3. THE CYNICS

More important than these first two schools are the Cynics. Their leader was Antisthenes of Athens (445–365). He taught in the Gymnasium at Cynosarges. This is the reason why the entire school bears the name it does—Cynics. To him the weightiest contribution of Socratism to philosophy was the ideal of autarchy or self-sufficiency,

because to him nothing was more important than virtue. This alone suffices. He carried his rejection of external goods to the extreme. "I would rather lose my mind than satisfy my desires." This led him logically to despise culture, science, religion, national ties, and especially mores and propriety. Whatever mankind refrained from doing for any of these reasons, he practiced openly and without shame, merely to show his utter contempt for and absolute detachment from material things. By such an attitude, the present-day idea of Cynics and cynicism received the nuance which characterizes the school itself. Among other things, he fostered the cultivation of what Socrates considered to be strength ( $\Sigma\omega\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\eta\ i\sigma\chi\upsilon\sigma$ ), the narrow and steep path to virtue which became the ideal of self-restraint, toil, and constancy ( $\pi\circ\nu\sigma$ ) as Hercules had exemplified them in his own lifetime. *Hercules* also was the title of the chief literary labor of Antisthenes. From this it was but a step to the *sustine et abstine* of the stoical "wise men." Surprisingly, this crass volitional orientation clothed itself in the language of intellectualism: Whoever lives in this way is indeed a wise man, is a person of discernment, is a knowledgeable fellow. The Socratic terminology was retained, and through its preservation we can appreciate how, in the history of philosophy, a distinction must be made between the expression of a thought and the thought itself. This is exemplified once again in the philosophy of the Cynics.

Looked at from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, Antisthenes is both a sensualist and a metaphysical materialist. These deductions are based on an analysis of the argument which he carried on with Plato, of which the ancients give us a vivid account. According to them Antisthenes is supposed to have said: "Yes, my dear Plato, I do see a horse, but not horsiness" (the ideal of a horse, the universal idea of a horse). To this Plato is reported to have replied: "This is due to the fact, Antisthenes, that you do possess a good pair of eyes, but not a corresponding intellect." This anecdote serves to impress upon us the fact that Antisthenes admitted sensory impressions and sensible representations, but considered universal ideas or ideas as such mere fictions ( $\psi\iota\lambda\alpha\ \epsilon\pi\iota\nu\o\iota\alpha\i$ ). For this reason it is meaningless to say: "Socrates is a man." We may only declare: "Socrates is Socrates, that is the Socrates whom I see." Such a view had at least this advantage: there can be no such thing as a difference of opinion. "One person cannot contradict another."

Besides advocating sensualism, Antisthenes also expounded ma-

terialism: "Of these they lay hold and obstinately maintain, that only the things which can be touched or handled have being or essence, because they define being and body as one, and if anyone else says that what is not a body exists, they altogether despise him and will hear nothing but body," as Plato says of the Sophists (*Soph.*, 295 a ff.; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 253). A war of giants and gods took place in connection with this problem. We can observe how bitterly it was waged from the spirited language of Plato, who debated with Protagoras. He recognized this intellectual wizard as the true father of sensualism and materialism. If all knowledge is only sensory knowledge, then there is no difference between Protagoras and a polywog, for a polywog also has sense faculties. For this reason Protagoras should not have asserted that man is the measure of all things; rather he should have said that a pig or a monkey was the yardstick by which all things are measured. Why Protagoras should have accepted money for his instructions remains a riddle that cannot be solved. This materialism of the Cynics works its way into the philosophy of the Stoa.

Diogenes of Sinope (d. 324) attracted attention less by his ideas than by his originality. To show how strongly he had been influenced by the idea of autarchy he became a beggar, lived in a barrel, and even discarded his drinking cup when he spied a young man drinking water from his cupped hands. He turned his back on the cultural tradition of his time and lived an unheralded existence. "I coin anew the values that are now current" was a statement often on his tongue. He was a forerunner of the cult: "Back to nature." Crates of Thebes was another Cynic. He was the richest man of his day, but he treasured "virtue" more highly than wealth; he renounced his possessions, joined the Cynics, and led the life of a mendicant.

#### 4. CYRENAIC SCHOOL

The Cyrenaic school moved in the opposite direction from the Cynics. This school traces its origin to Aristippus of Cyrene (c. 435-355). In it hedonism flourished. Value is found to be in desire, indeed in that desire that is perceived in bodily sensation. Aristippus did not propose such a doctrine primarily to justify the life of a debauchee, but solely as an attempt to discover a reasonable solution for the problem regarding the basis of value. For him anything that is speculatively based on notions and ideas does not constitute a true value; only that which is derived from feeling based on immediate

and direct experience: "Only that which can be experienced is intelligible to us" ( $\muόνον τό πάθος γμīν ἔστι φαινόμενον$ ); it is intelligible because it deals with direct sensory affection ( $παρόν πάθος$ ). And for Aristippus this can be only desire. He understands this solely subjectively and sensualistically after the fashion of Protagoras. "Man is the measure of all things; for he has the criterion of them in himself, and when he thinks that things are such as he experiences them to be, he thinks what is and is true to himself" (*Theaetetus*, 178 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 180). This Plato tells us, grouping together in the *Theaetetus* Protagoras, Antisthenes, and Aristippus, because for all three subjective sensory experience and phenomena are the decisive elements of truth and of value (see p. 73). In this sense Bentham is later to write in the nineteenth century: "What happiness is, every man knows, because what pleasure is, every man knows, and what pain is, every man knows. But what justice is — this is what on every occasion is the subject-matter of dispute" (Bentham, *Complete Works*, Vol. IX, p. 123).

That not everyone knows what desire is and that in this respect at least a person may be subject to the greatest deception may be seen in the case of Hegesias, who was so little content with his own type of hedonism that he quickly developed into a pessimist. He was given the honorary title of death's advocate ( $πεισιθάνατος$ ), because in his lecture he constantly encouraged his listeners to commit suicide, until finally Ptolemaius Lagu (323-285) forbade him by police order to disseminate such propaganda.

How strange that the speculation of Socrates should be interpreted in such diverse ways by the very circle that had gathered so closely around him. Was it because his philosophy was so mysterious or so fertile or so undeveloped? Which of these various exegeses correctly expressed the essence and the wishes of the Master? A decision cannot be reached until we have learned to know something of his greatest disciple, the great figure that emerges from the circle, Plato himself.

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## CHAPTER 5

### PLATO — I: ON THE GOOD AND THE TRUE

#### LIFE

Plato was born in 427 B.C. He traces his lineage to the ancient Athenian nobility, and by this very fact he was born into the cultural and political turmoil of his time. His set purpose, to mold the world and to fashion life, is characteristic of his personality. In his *Seventh Letter*, which contains many autobiographical details, Plato tells us how he resolved to adopt a public career as his vocation in life. But when around 404 B.C. he experienced at firsthand the dictatorship of the Thirty, and a year later came to grips with the regime of the democrats and learned of their rapacity through the unjust condemnation of Socrates, he became "dizzy," as he himself writes and confesses, "so that I finally became convinced that present Republics are woefully constructed and labor under vicious governments. And so I saw myself driven to cultivate a true philosophy, a resolution that I can praise in retrospect, for it became for me a source of knowledge of everything that is worthwhile, or at least of that which either in public life or in individual circumstances may be considered as just. Mankind will never succeed in freeing itself of its miseries, I explained to myself, until either the representatives of a genuine and authoritative philosophy are entrusted with the task of ruling the Republics or the possessors of power in the Republics resolve to become experts in philosophy under impulse from and in relation to Divine Providence" (*Ep.*, VII, 324, b ff.).

This theme, which he formulates here for the first time, will be repeated throughout his whole life. He hoped his philosophy would prove to be the way to truth and as such would offer at the same time a way to the good both in public and private life. In pursuance of this purpose he took up the struggle against all those who were ignorant of the true nature of man especially against the Sophists and the Rhetoricians. To him these were "artistic street cleaners" and

"cooks" who had an eye only for what men feel drawn toward and like, who flatter and mislead their disciples by glittering artificialities and by enticing phrases, but who know nothing whatsoever of what man really is and what he should be or become. To teach these truths to mankind is the task of the philosopher. This Plato recognized as his own life's work.

In his early youth Plato's ambition was to be a poet. After he had struck up a friendship with Socrates he burned all his plays and dedicated his writings and his life to philosophy, that is, to the scientific investigation of knowledge and of value. After the soul-rending shock occasioned by the death of Socrates, he fled to Euclid in Megara. Around 395-394 B.C. he returned home and took part in the Corinthian War. Sometime between 390-388 he traveled extensively. In the course of his journeys he visited Egypt and Cyrene and finally went to Tarentum, where he became acquainted with Archytas. Through this acquaintanceship he came into contact with the Pythagoreans, and this contact colored his speculation, giving direction to all his activity: for example, his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, pedagogy, his ethicopolitical views, his eschatological myths, and especially the form of science and the manner in which his Academy was conducted.

Through Archytas he succeeded in gaining entry into the court of Syracuse, and there he came to know Dionysius I. During his sojourn at the court, Plato hoped to persuade this prince to embody his own ethicopolitical ideals into the practical administration of the Syracusan kingdom. But this autocrat was too weak and too vacillating; he chose to rule by caprice rather than by intelligence. Plato's dreams were rudely shattered, when, due to the intrigue of Dionysius, he was put up for sale in the slave market of Aegina. Only by a stroke of good fortune was he discovered by Anniceris, a Socratic of the Cyrenean school, and bought from under the noses of other bidders. When he returned to Athens, Plato sought to repay the ransom money to Anniceris, but that philosopher refused. With it Plato then purchased a garden close to the shrine of Heros Academos and there founded his Academy in 387 B.C.

If this story is true, the first university to be established on European soil was founded on the strangest of foundations, the sum necessary to purchase a philosopher from slavery. By his lectures in the Academy Plato achieved greater fame than by his writings. For him writing was "a beautiful pastime" (*Phaedrus*, 276 e). The subjects upon which he

discussed in the Academy were philosophy, mathematics —  $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon\varsigma$  ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω (Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here) is supposed to have been inscribed above the entrance — and astronomy, perhaps also zoology and botany. We must not, however, picture to ourselves the Platonic Academy as an institution dedicated to learning and research according to our concept of the modern university, in which the theoretical, intellectual development of the students is stressed, and their formation and guidance are relegated to the background. This latter aim was especially cultivated by the Platonic Academy. As a consequence of such an orientation, movements which influenced public life were generated within its confines. In the ancient past, philosophy was not solely the occupation of intellectuals who were estranged from reality; rather philosophy was considered as a positive formative action upon reality as it was then known. In this respect the Platonic Academy surpassed the other schools of the era. For it always had its finger on the pulse of the political events of the times, for example, in Cyrene, Megalopolis, Elis, Macedonia, Assos. The Academy was especially the refuge and the haven for the opponents of tyrants and dictators.

Plato himself was by no means a pure theorist. He set his heart on proving that his philosophical ideal of a Republic was workable. Around 364, because of this prepossession and conviction, he made a second journey to Sicily, this time to Dionysius II. The effort resulted in failure. He made a third trip in 361, but this time only to do a favor for his friend Dion. This too remained sterile of results. From that time on Plato studiously avoided public affairs; he lived only for his teaching and for his writing. He died in 347. Immediately after his death legends arose which transfigured and transformed him into a son of Apollo.

### W O R K S

All the works which Plato published have been preserved. With the exception of his *Apology* and his *Letters*, all are written in the form of dialogues. The literary activity of Plato encompasses a period of approximately fifty years, a full half century. Today we are able to arrange the single works into their respective periods with a fair degree of accuracy, and so we can distinguish between the works of his youth, those of the period of transition, those of his mature years, and those which he composed in his old age.

**Works of his youth.** Among the fruits of his pen in his youth

*Laches* treats of bravery; *Charmides* of temperance; *Euthyphro* of piety; *Thrasymachus*, which we read today as the first book in the *Republic*, of justice; *Protagoras* of the essence of virtue in general. To this period, furthermore, belong *Ion*, *Hippias I* and *II*, the *Apology* and *Crito*. The dates of composition for these are certainly earlier than Plato's first journey to Sicily. All these Dialogues treat of the Socratic problems of value and of knowledge in the Socratic manner, but all end in an *aporia* or philosophical difficulty—a circumstance which seems to indicate that Plato even at this early date had advanced farther than his master Socrates.

**Period of transition.** There follows a series of writings—those of the transition period—in which new problems are mentioned more and more frequently, especially the theory of ideas. To this group belong *Lysis*, which deals with friendship; *Cratylus*, which treats of Plato's philosophy of speech; *Euthydemus*, which ridicules the fallacious conclusions of the Sophists, especially those of Antisthenes; and the minor *Menexenus*. These Dialogues may also have been written before the first Sicilian adventure. After this misadventure, *Meno* and *Gorgias* must have been put together, because they reveal the influence of the Pythagorean teaching concerning the transmigration of souls. The former touches upon the possibility of teaching virtue, and the latter is a fiery onslaught against the method and the basic philosophic outlook of the Sophists.

**Maturity.** The writings which Plato authored in his mature years are numbered among the great masterpieces of the world's literature. The *Phaedo* is a Dialogue on death: we must die to the senses and to the material world so that the spirit, the immortal soul, might become free to wing its way into the realm of ideas. The *Symposium* is a Dialogue on life: we should look for and love the beautiful; and again, as in the *Phaedo*, by philosophy and pure knowledge, so now, through Eros, we are to rise to the kingdom of primeval beauty and of eternal value. In Plato's chief work, the ten books of the *Republic* (*Politeia*), justice forms the chief topic; actually, however, these books cover the whole range of philosophy: the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, ethics, pedagogy, the philosophy of human rights and of the ideal republic. The right and the true, the world of ideals, should be seen and appreciated wherever they appear, so that we might live according to their dictates. "In heaven the prototypes lie ready, so that everyone who is of good will may examine them and mold himself after them." The *Republic* was finished about 374 B.C.

After this there followed the *Phaedrus*, the work of consummate art which deals with the subject of rhetoric, but is in reality a summary of the entire Platonic philosophy and a very facile introduction to it; then the *Parmenides*, in which Plato gives an account of the *aporias* for his teaching on ideas; and finally the *Theaetetus*, which deals principally with problems concerning the theory of knowledge and summarizes the views of Heraclitus, Protagoras, Antisthenes, and Aristippus. These works precede his second trip to Sicily.

**Old Age.** After this second journey (367) we have the products of his old age: *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus*. In these works we can perceive a change in the interests which occupy Plato. Only in *Philebus* does the problem of value recur. Logico-dialectical problems dominate his thinking. The *Sophist* carries on and develops the notions of the Sophists. The *Statesman* deals with the politician according to several viewpoints of definition, content, extent, division, and ramification. *Timaeus* offers us an insight into cosmology. For centuries this Dialogue afforded a philosophy of life and presented a concept of the world which were held in esteem by the Western world. To his last years we may trace the work which enriches us with so many particulars of the life of Plato himself, the *Seventh Letter*. His final opus, the twelve books of the *Laws* (*Nomoi*), Plato himself was unable to publish. We read it today in a version which most probably should be ascribed to Philip of Opus. The *Laws* resume the theme of the *Republic*. The literary activity of his later years is no longer characterized by the philosophical verve and the speculative flights which are evident in the *Republic*. Instead we find in detail a wealth of political, juridical, religious, and especially pedagogical ordinances. "Whoever plumbs the depths speculatively, manifests his love for the riches of life." In them we become acutely aware of the life experiences and the ripe wisdom of the true philosopher. In his later years Plato grew ever more tolerant. His radical demands for a common sharing of women and a consequent communal existence of children and of communal utilization of goods which had been propounded in the *Republic* disappear in the *Laws*. In the later works, Socrates, who had usually led the discussion in the earlier Dialogues, recedes more and more in the background. In the *Laws* he disappears entirely. This alteration in the external form of the Dialogue is also symptomatic of a change in the speculation of Plato himself. Plato has so far outstripped his teacher that he can no longer put his thoughts into his former mentor's mouth.

**Spurious:**

In the *Corpus Platonicum* that has been handed down to us the following works are counterfeit: Περὶ δικαίου (*On Justice*), Περὶ ἀρετῆς (*On Virtue*), *Demodocus*, *Sisyphus*, *Eryxias*, *Axiochus*, ὅποι (*The Boundaries*), *Alcibiades II*, *Hipparchus*, *Erastai*. More or less doubtful are *Minos*, *Alcibiades I*, *Theages*, *Epinomis*. Of his letters only 6, 7, and 8 are trustworthy.\*

**Editions:**

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\* The explanation for the spuriousness (of certain of Plato's writings) which J. Zürcher recently advanced in his *Corpus Academicum* (1954), has not met with acceptance on the part of philologists.

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## THE GOOD

The philosophy of Plato begins where Socrates left off, namely, at the problem dealing with the essence of the good. The notion of value possessed as many different meanings in his day as it does in our own. In ancient times it might denote an economic, technical, vital, aesthetical, religious or ethical content. For Plato the problem of value was an ethical one. The personality and the achievement of Socrates moved him to propose it in this form. In Socrates the man, Plato was able to experience ethical value as incorporated in a practical and living way. But how should he phrase it in technical language and how define it? The explanation which Socrates had bequeathed him ran as follows: "Be wise, for then you are good."

### 1. KNOWLEDGE

But in what does this wisdom consist? Simply in knowledge? Now the Sophists also thought that the essence of human value could be found in knowledge and in ability. In the Dialogues which were written in his youth, Plato rejected this concept. In its stead he substituted the Socratic concept which identified virtue with knowledge. This virtue should be, as the interpretation of it always proposed, something quite different precisely because it was a knowledge of the good. But this is clearly nothing more than a *petitio principii* (begging the question), because we would like to know just exactly what the good actually is, for with Plato we have been seeking an answer to the question: What is good? We do not settle the matter nor do we answer the question simply by repeating the word, good, as is evident from an examination of *Republic*, 505 c (ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 766). Plato had always been aware of this, and we find his sceptical aporia at the conclusion of the Socratic Dialogue. In his mind this was neither mere irony nor oratorical suspense conceived as an artifice to spur the student on to further research, but rather it was the realization that the Socratic answer to the problem concerning the essence of the moral good was inadequate.

There was no Socratic period in Plato's life in the sense that

he held exactly the same views as his teacher. Always, even in his earlier Dialogues, *Hippias II* and the *Republic I*, Plato had refuted in no mistaken terms the thesis that knowledge and ability represented the good without further qualifications. He says drily that the liar must be the same as a truthful man, and the thief would in nowise differ from the watchman, for the liar as well as the thief possess both knowledge and ability. In fact, anyone who performs an evil act of his own free will should be considered better than one who does it against his will, because the former possessed more knowledge than the latter. In these examples, the judgment of identity, "knowledge is value," is carried with iron logic to its bitterest conclusion and becomes involved in a *reductio ad absurdum*. In the *Hippias I* (296 d) Plato states quite boldly: "Because of these examples we must flatly reject the fallacy that knowledge and ability represent always and absolutely the good." And *Menexenus* characterizes sheer knowledge and sheer ability as *πανοπυρία*, that is, a faculty capable of everything. In an ideology which is predicated solely on achievement and power, the cleverest will *de facto* always be the first and always the most powerful; and the best liar can, in fact should, become the minister of propaganda.

## 2. ENDS, PURPOSES

Later on, Aristotle returns to this problem and teaches also that knowledge as such is morally indifferent; with it a person can do everything (*πανοπυρία*); and if we should make a distinction between a lie and the truth, we would be able to do so only because there is something that intervenes, namely the intention (*ήθος*). Intention is an attitude of the will and its evaluation depends upon the end and the purpose which the will chooses. If these are good, so are the intentions, knowledge, and ability (*Meta.*, V, 29; *Eth. Nic.*, VIII, 13).

Plato had already arrived at the same conclusion and as a consequence had developed it for his own system. It is in the *Euthydemus* that he refers to "something" (*τι*) to which knowledge and ability must be referred, if they themselves are to be of any value. What kind of ends these are and why they should be good is not clear (*Euthydemus*, 292 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 154). But that, after all, is the whole question.

## 3. EROS

*Lysis.* This problem is fairly well developed in *Lysis*. If every

value ( $\phi\imath\lambda\sigma\nu$ ) in turn depends upon something else (i.e., some other value) because it is what it is by reason of this something else, and this superior something possesses its own value again because of something still higher (another superior end), and this likewise is evaluated by something else and so on into infinity, we must finally arrive at a dominant value of love ( $\pi\rho\sigma\tau\sigma\nu\phi\imath\lambda\sigma\nu$ ). Upon this dominant value depend all other existing values. If we fail to accept such a basis for value, such a source for value, such a principle of value, the whole chain of value relationships becomes worthless and meaningless. What Plato succeeds in bringing to our attention by this reasoning is the priority, the apriority of evaluation. For a thing to have a value means, in the last instance, to be given preference, to be able to lay a claim to our treasures and to our loves. Value is not what is actually loved but only that which by its very essence is capable of being loved and therefore must be loved. This is true in the first instance only of supreme value, but in derivation it holds also for other values.

**Symposium.** That the good, in spite of its apriori nature in the face of all human values, possesses a relationship to a subject and its inclinations is shown in the *Symposium*, which treats of the philosophical problem of value in connection with the notion of Eros. When in the Eros a person diligently makes use of the beautiful and the good, he does so because they belong to him ( $o\imath\kappa\sigma\iota\sigma\nu$ ), because they represent the prototype, the ideal of his nature ( $\alpha\rho\chi\alpha\imath\alpha\phi\imath\sigma\sigma$ )—his own, his best ego which he loves even as he loves himself and in loving which he is made happy and blessed. That everyone should consider as good that which makes human beings happy is taken for granted and requires no further explanation (205 c).

If human needs and the feeling of happiness are discussed in connection with this problem, we should not immediately conclude that Plato was attempting to teach eudaemonism or even hedonism. Already in the *Gorgias* in which Socrates disputes with Callicles and his circle, Plato had explained his rejection of morality that is based on the natural, inconstant appetitive faculty of man. Even in the *Symposium* not every Eros is canonized, but only that Eros is accepted which arouses enthusiasm for whatever shares in the prototype of the good and the beautiful ( $\epsilon\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\sigma\nu\pi\alpha\gamma\kappa\alpha\lambda\sigma\nu$ ), and which for this reason is itself valuable. The prototype is valuable, not because we love it; on the contrary, we love it, because it is valuable. Insofar as we are concerned it is entirely apriori; it is always a being,

without beginning or end, without increase or decrease, without limits, and without a foundation laid down by another. As a "uniform good" it is entirely self-sustaining. The moral good, therefore, is not a value in the sense in which an object sold in the market place has value. For such a value is determined by the law of supply and demand. Moral good is absolute.

The ethics of Plato is therefore as objective and normative as Kant's, although it is not, as is his, an ethic of necessity or duty. Though Eros may be a great god, the prototype of beauty is nevertheless independent of the concessions or favors of men; to be sure, it precedes them. By means of this interpretation of Plato, namely, that the good belongs to man as does his original nature and as such contributes to his happiness and bliss, it becomes evident that there emerges a truth which is not clearly expressed in Kant, namely, that the good exercises an attraction over us and it appears as good to us and not primarily as a duty or necessity.

#### 4. BEING

**Being and good in the Republic.** In what this good consists actually is not discussed in the *Symposium*. But how is this central problem solved in Plato's masterpiece? It is significant that in the *Republic*, where he finally develops *ex professo* the idea of the good in itself (*αὐτὸν τὸ ἀγαθόν*) upon which the whole guidance of the *Republic* depends, Plato must finally confess that he is unable to say directly what the content of the good really is. He can only indirectly arrive at an approximation of the idea of the good, insofar as he describes what kind of activity it can unfold. But even this definition through indirection is possible only by means of a figure of speech. This figure is the famous comparison of the sun with the idea of the good (505 c ff.). Just as in the visible world the sun makes everything perceptible, live, and grow, so in the realm of the invisible the idea of the good is the ultimate reason for the fact that being itself is known and possesses existence and essence. Everything that exists only because of the idea of the good. The idea of the good itself is not being but stands above and beyond it (*ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*), far surpassing everything both in power and in sublimity. By this interpretation the ethical problem glides imperceptibly into the province of metaphysics. In the kingdom of being the kingdom of good should shine with great brilliance. In this way there is opened a road by which the content of the good can be made understandable. In the

world of science we need apprehend only the realm of being, and in the truths connected with it we possess also values. And when we examine these in the light of the one principle in which they are all included and from which they may be deduced, we possess in this supreme principle the source reason of all value, and the good in itself is no longer a mere postulate, but an infinitely fertile, infinitely rich idea.

**Assumptions of a metaphysics of value.** This conception rests upon the theory that the basis of being is good, because it is in fact an ultimate basis. But beyond this we can detect a more profound presupposition, namely, that being itself is good. But being—and with this we arrive finally at our last assumption—is good only because Platonic metaphysics views being under its aspect as final cause. As we shall see later (cf. p. 93), for Plato every *eidos* (form) is a “wherefore” (*οὗ ἔνεκα*) and therefore a good; for purpose naturally denotes a value for everything that has reference to it or seeks to achieve it. For this reason we find that Aristotle identifies his final cause with the good and offers as explanation that the final cause is the ultimate cause of all change and of all motion (*Meta.*, I, 3; 983, a 32), and that because of it God moves the whole world “as a thing beloved” (*ὡς ἐρώμενον*); and this movement on the part of God means that all things long for Him. This well-known statement of Aristotelian metaphysics becomes understandable only through Plato’s teleology of Forms or Ideas. In Plato, however, the genesis of this particular form of ontological speculation may be found not in an ontological but in an ethical statement of the problem in *Lysis*. In it we discover developed for the first time a hierarchy of teleological values in which one value depends on the other and the whole series is anchored to a supreme value. Since this teleological concept of the *eidos* is complete and universal, it remains valid also for ontology as such and confers upon Platonic metaphysics its distinctive feature, so that the principle of being and along with it all being appear as good. Since Plato created this world of ideas, *philosophia perennis* has always assumed that God, the creator of the world, is good, just as we take for granted for the same reason that being as such is good.

But can we really assume that all being is actually good? Prescinding from the well-authenticated atrocities that fill history’s pages, atrocities which obviously belong to the category of “being,” even in those segments of the world into which man cannot penetrate with his misery, the world still cannot be said to be perfect in all

respects. For there is such a thing as physical evil. Does God not hold sway over an abysmal pit of horrors? And is not the principle of being from which all reality is derived also a principle of evil and consequently cannot be a "uniform good"?

Surprisingly the whole of ancient philosophy, when it treats of being, describes only ideal being; to it evil (wickedness) is simply non-being. The same is true also of Plato. His system of philosophy is not as yet conscious that by evolving such a concept it applies *apriori* a selective criterion and for that reason it teaches an ontology that is itself determined *apriori* by principles of value and is consequently limited. It is certainly not the whole being conceived in theoretical truth that sets the limits upon the good, but it is the ideal being, that is, being already determined by the principle of value. But such an idea means that the decisive factor in the knowledge of the good is not being as such, but only the criterion of value which differentiates being from being. In this we can detect the primacy of practical reason. But we must not forget that the philosophers of this era knew nothing of such a distinction. They spoke only of being. It is in modern philosophy, in the ethics of Kant and in the philosophy of value, that the knowledge of value is made a problem. For Plato the way to the concept of the good was beyond "being" through "truth."

## 5. PLEASURE

**His mature Dialogues on hedonism.** Although in his *Republic* Plato transferred the ethical problem to the realm of metaphysics and by so doing struck out upon a new path that would become characteristic of him, he could not rid himself of this purely ethico-phenomenological problem. In the *Theaetetus* he busies himself with it and at the same time takes up a discussion of sensualism; these questions are dealt with also in the *Laws* and in the *Philebus*. In these works the question is phrased as follows: Is good perhaps identical with pleasure? To this question Socrates himself had given a negative reply in the *Gorgias*. The question and its definite answer occupied the Academy constantly. At the basis of the discussion we find various opinions on the question that had been broached both by Aristippus and Eudoxus. To them Plato had to dedicate a special treatise.

First of all, he clarified the term. Pleasure may mean practically anything. The debauchee has his own peculiar pleasure as do the

abstemious and the virtuous, the foolish as well as the wise. The common and therefore essential elements of pleasure may be sought in the cravings, the clamorings, and the satisfactions which are experienced by each individual (*Philebus*, 12 d; 34 c ff.). The good then would be that after which men craved and for which they strove. In fact such an object was good precisely because men longed for it and it satisfied them when obtained. Value has its source in the concept of "liking" and of "relish," in a "tendency," as Kant has phrased it. This had been the theory of Eudoxus. This, in turn, agrees perfectly with that theory placed in the mouth of Theaetetus but which in reality stemmed from Aristippus, who in this matter advocated a theory of values parallel to Protagoras' sensualism that was based on theoretical knowledge. In matters which concern an experiencing of value and hence in the question of the useful, of the good and the just, of the beautiful and happiness itself, everything depends upon purely personal feelings. In this every man is an autocrat. Whatever appears to a person as valuable is truly valuable for him. Whether or not he enjoys himself and is happy rightfully is not a matter of great concern. What is important is the fact that he is happy, and no one can rob him of the good time he had; for it was at one time directly present to him, present in the sensible pathos which he felt in the "affection of the lower appetitive faculty," as Kant will express it in his philosophy later on. For this reason it is for him always "true," "evident," and "inamissible" (*Theaetetus*, 160 c; 178 b; *Philebus*, 37 a b).

**The criticism of Plato.** Although he championed ethics based on truth and on justice, Plato never became a rigorist as did Kant. Especially in the evening of his life he realized how large a role pleasure and love play in human life. In ethics we deal, as he said, not with gods but with men. "Pleasures and pains and desires are a part of human nature, and on them every mortal being must of necessity hang and depend with the most eager interest" (*Laws*, 732 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, pp. 500). As a consequence, in *Philebus* he decided in favor of a life compounded of pleasure and virtue, of prudence and passion. He had never chosen pleasure as a moral principle. And no matter how strongly he advocated happiness as a value in opposition to Cynicism, he fought just as strenuously against the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and every kind of eudaemonism according to which the source and the essence of every value is to be sought in pleasure and in nothing else.

He advanced three different arguments to defend his position. First, it is not correct to maintain that the subjective fleeting sensory feeling should be the criterion of value. Often enough, later on, a thing which momentarily appeared to us to be valuable in reality turned out to be absolutely worthless. For this reason he made a distinction between pleasures which are true and those which are false. By so doing he employed objective criteria and he consequently discovered that the experiencing of a pleasure as such is no longer decisive and is neither the source nor the essence of value (*Theaetetus*, 169 d f; 187; *Philebus*, 36 c-53 b). Pleasure is furthermore an *apeiron*, that is, it is something that is undetermined and so permits of increase and of diminution. For this reason pleasure is not univocal, and it may sometimes happen that a thing that appears to us as pleasurable could actually become unpleasant, for pain also possesses a capacity for increase and diminution (*Philebus*, 27 d-31 c). Finally, pleasure belongs to the realm of becoming, to the sphere of change, because it denotes an experience or a suffering. Consequently it may undergo successive stages of appearing, disappearing, or changing. For a true good such states are impossible, because it belongs to the realm of being (*Philebus*, 53 c-55 d).

**Order of pleasure.** For this reason, as pleasure should find a place in our lives, it ought to be regulated and guided by moderation and order, by reason and judgment. This is the conclusion arrived at in *Philebus*. But this means that pleasure is not a principle but a concomitant phenomenon of the good. Life itself is regulated by the ideal order. It is at the same time the foundation for pleasure and happiness. Not everything that causes pleasure is good, but whatever is good causes pleasure. "For what good can the just man have which is separated from pleasure" (*Laws*, 663 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 440), and "hence something that is accompanied by the pleasant." In fact, this law holds also for aesthetic satisfaction. The applause of some unqualified individual is not decisive in the selection of what is truly and genuinely beautiful, but the applause of the cultured and the morally elite is, because they possess an insight into objective propriety that constitutes the essence of beauty (*Laws*, 658 e). More especially, in the personal morality of the individual we find that the foundation for happiness is justice and not what a person feels and thinks it to be: "For the goods of which the many speak are not really good . . . health, beauty, wealth, bodily gifts (keen eye or quick ear), position and the power to satisfy all his appetites, long

life and when possible immortality may appear as such. . . . But you and I say, that while to the just and the holy all these things are the best of possessions, to the unjust they are all, including even health, the greatest of evils. For in truth to have all sight, and hearing, and the use of the senses, and to live at all without justice and virtue, even though a man be rich in all the so-called goods of fortune, is the greatest of evils, if life be immortal" (*Laws*, 661 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 439). And the same is true also in the public life of the state: "But if either a single person or an oligarchy or a democracy has a soul eager after pleasures and desires — wanting to be filled with them, yet retaining none of them, and perpetually afflicted with an endless and insatiable disorder; and this evil spirit, having first trampled the laws under foot, becomes the master either of the state or of an individual — then, as I was saying, salvation is hopeless" (*Laws*, 714 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 485).

## 6. EVIL

**The problem of evil.** If Plato devotes so much space to a consideration of the good, we might feel ourselves justified in concluding that he would give a corresponding treatment to the problem of evil: evil not only in the sense of a physical evil but also of moral evil. But actually Plato observes a strict silence in connection with it. He was a man who was extremely positive in his ideas; he had neither time nor place for negative views in his speculation. His idealism, however, did not mislead him to overlook entirely the fact of evil; on the contrary he recognized realistically that "Few are the goods of human life, and many are the evils" (*Rep.*, 379 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 643). And another text sounds truly prophetic: "They will tell you that the just man who is thought unjust will be scourged, racked, bound — will have his eyes burnt out; and at the last, after suffering every kind of evil, he will be impaled: Then he will understand that he ought to seem, and not to be just" (*Rep.*, 361 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 625). In his philosophical system he has no category for evil. That being which Plato recognizes as true and real being is only ideal being. What is opposed to value cannot be classed as being.

**A principle of evil.** Why does such opposition to value exist in the world? Man is held accountable for moral evil; God is not responsible. The reason for physical evil, e.g., sickness, suffering, poverty, and death, may be found in the finiteness of the visible

and material world. Such evil depends of necessity on this (*Theaetetus*, 176 a), i.e., "mortal nature and earthly sphere" (ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 178). Later on there will be proposed as a derivation of this teaching, which Plato offers here only as an explanation for the defective perfection of the world, the theory that matter as such is evil. At this stage of his development, however, Plato does not as yet advocate this more profound Manichaeism. Sometimes students of Plato speak of an evil world-soul which he was supposed to have invented for his system (*Laws*, 896 e ff.). By such a principle evil could be generated of necessity both in the physical and the moral orders. Perhaps such tendencies of Parsiism did appear occasionally in the Academy. But in the speculation of Plato they had no place. Plato, moreover, taught expressly that the operations of the "wicked souls" were meaningless and unimportant in comparison to the operations of the cosmic soul. As a consequence, it is extremely probable that the so-called evil world-soul which he is thought to have taught was nothing more than a passing reflection.

**Limitations of Platonism.** But evil is an incontestable reality. That it could not be fitted into the philosophy of Plato is a defect, a defect however which can be found in all systems of idealism (see p. 86). Plato took up this question again in connection with his theodicy. A question with which all later theodicies busied themselves also caused him mental unrest: If there is a God, how is it possible that things happen in this world as though He did not exist or as if He did not care to exercise His providence over it? In propounding such problems for discussion, the whole question of evil was again broached.

## THE TRUE

The second notion upon which Plato focused his philosophy was truth. To speak of Plato is to speak of his theory of ideas or forms. We can approach this theory only by beginning with his view of truth.

### 1. NOTION OF TRUTH

Truth may be a property of our speculation and of our speech: logical truth. It consists in having our judgments correspond in content with the facts which they seek to reproduce or express. Truth may also be a property of being. When a being is as it should be, it is true: ontological truth. In this sense we speak of true gold,

true flowers, true men, etc. Plato knew both notions of truth. Ontological truth, however, was especially basic to his philosophy. The distinction between a true being ( $\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\omega\varsigma\ \delta\nu$ ) and a "being" that is not true, because it rests midway between being and non-being, pervades his entire speculation. The presupposition for these two meanings of the notion of truth is to be found in his view that everything that is true must be unchangeable — something that is always identical with itself, as he was accustomed to say. For Plato, then, truth was eternal or, more correctly, it was without time or beyond time. For centuries this concept of truth gave direction to the speculation and the philosophy of the West.

In order to understand the unique nature of Plato's teaching, we need only to examine the standpoint of that philosophy of life which saw in this concept of truth a falsification, as it believed, of the eternal fluid reality and as a consequence sought something else as truth. In such a philosophy, truth is, for example, whatever is genuine experience or whatever is "fruitful." The historical reasons for Plato's concept of truth must be sought in Socrates and in his universal ideas as well as in Parmenides and his eternally motionless being. Not in vain did the pioneers of this new philosophy of life, Nietzsche and Klages, direct their efforts repeatedly against the philosophy of the ancients. The basic reason which led Plato to adopt the position he did was his ideal of a mathematical science, which was for him also the ideal for science as such, as it was to be later for Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant.

## 2. THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

**Sensation.** What first interested Plato in his speculation on truth was the question of its source. Where do we find the truth? In his solution he excludes first of all the sense faculties as possible sources; he does this very decidedly from the very beginning and in a manner typical both for him and for all later rationalists. For him sensation is not only the subjective perception of the senses but also the objective realm of the senses, the material world in space and in time. The perception of the senses is unreliable. We continually experience, for example, that our own eyes repeatedly see things in a different light. Of special interest is the fact that the same sensible events may appear differently to other people than they do to us. This lack of certitude in matters of sense perception had occasioned Parmenides and especially the Sophists to stress their relativity, and

in this Plato agrees with them. He also viewed the perceptions of the senses with a sceptical eye. In the realm of the senses there is no knowledge that is ever the same and, as a consequence, there can be no truth. For this reason the philosopher must die to his body and to his senses, as we read in the *Phaedo*; otherwise he will never be able to contemplate truth in all its purity.

In addition, the world of the senses is also a world of change and of perpetual motion where everything is in a state of fluidity. This was the thesis of the Heracliteans, and it made a vivid impression on Plato. If everything is in the state of flux in the world of reality, there can be in this sense world neither truth nor science because nothing continues in the same state, whereas the concept of truth demands that a thing be in constant identity with itself.

The perceptions of the senses, finally, never represented formal knowledge to Plato; they were only the materials of knowledge. The contents of these individual sense perceptions are constantly being subjected by us to an examination. This examination reveals what is common to our various sensations, and we express this common element through our judgments of identity. It is this common element, moreover, which forms the object of scientific knowledge and of truth. The knowledge formed in judgment can never again be sentient, because sensation is limited to one sense faculty; here the perceptions of the individual sense faculties are examined, condensed, and assimilated. For this reason sensation cannot be a source of truth (*Rep.*, 523 ff., *Theaetetus*, 185 f.).

**The mind.** The source of truth ought rather to be sought in the soul: "when returning into herself she [the soul] reflects, then she passes into the other world, the region of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred . . . then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging" (*Phaedo*, 79 d.; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 464). By the soul Plato designated the mind, pure speculation (*νόησις*, *ἐπιστήμη*, *φρόνησις*). Upon it all knowledge must draw, only then does it arrive at truth.

1) *Apriorism.* But the mind needs this knowledge not indeed in order first to acquire truth; for the mind has always possessed this knowledge by virtue of its own nature. "How could he do this [recollect] unless there were knowledge and right reason already in him?" (*Phaedo*, 73 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 457.) Knowledge, for example, of identities as such, the large and the small, goodness,

justice, holiness, man, lyre, in general of every "essence as such." Notions, thoughts, certitudes (*λόγοι, ἔννοιαι, νοήματα, ἐπιστῆμαι*) are terms used by Plato to designate these essences. In short, they are the "ideas." These are always identical with themselves and they never change, just as truth does not. These ideas have been called "innate" or "inborn." It would be more correct to speak of them as *apriori* truths or truths of the ideal order. Plato himself said that we would have seen these pure thoughts in the pre-existence of the soul in the dwelling place of the gods, and we would recall them again, prompted by the perceptions of the senses in time and place (*ἀνάμνησις* = recollection). We do not regain or recover them solely by means of sensation; they are already present by reason of the glimpse we have obtained of them in the state of pre-existence. Precisely in this sense do we conceive the notion of *apriority*. At the same time we recognize that by such a conception Plato had in mind an archetypal knowledge which reveals to us all being in ideal form.

2) *Basis of his apriorism.* The most important element in this train of thought is the attempt which Plato made to prove the *apriority* of certitude in the ideal order. His proof may be summarized in this fashion: You cannot perceive sensations without previously permitting spiritual contents which did not have their origin in experience to enter in and be employed by them. If we compare, for instance, two pieces of wood (as he mentions in the *Phaedo*), we find that the two are not entirely the same, but they do approach more or less to the notion of equality. What took place while making this comparison? We related our representations of each of these pieces of wood to the idea of equality and by so doing measured, judged, and arranged the pieces themselves. We would not have been able to bring these two pieces together for a comparison if we had not at the start possessed the idea of equality. As he phrases it more generally: "Before we began to see or hear or perceive in any way, we must have had a knowledge of absolute equality, or we could not have referred to that standard the equals which are derived from the senses—for to that they all aspire, and of that they fall short" (*Phaedo*, 75 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 459). The *Theaetetus* further enumerates certain other *apriori* certitudes: identity, difference, opposition, unity, numerical precision, straightness, and crookedness. We perceive that these concepts which Plato propounds are fundamental and underlie all knowledge. And if we should object that all universal contents of knowledge are obtained by abstraction,

and therefore trace their origin to the perceptions of the senses, he would answer: You would be unable to begin the process of abstraction unless you possessed from the very beginning such ideas as identity, equality, similarity, unity, and plurality, because otherwise a comparison, which is the first step in abstraction, could not be initiated. In order to be able to compare, we must know in advance the one and the many, identity and difference. How otherwise could we differentiate one representation from another?

3) *The extent of the apriori.* To Plato not only were the fundamental notions of all knowledge apriori, but advancing along the same path he had already broken, he explained that everything that exists *in itself* or *as such*, hence every archetypal notion — beauty as such, goodness, justice, piety-in-itself — in fact every essence is apriori to the mind. It therefore need never be acquired again by experience but can always be brought back into consciousness by recall and recognition. Plato is an expressed rationalist and idealist. The entire world of the senses both in time and in place is transferred by him into the idea and into the pure concept, and it becomes understandable only because it is viewed from this standpoint. In order that sense perceptions as well as experience might became possible for us, the idea must first exist. Only by its medium can we interpret the senses and their data.

4) *Against materialism.* The proof for the presence of apriori elements in the human mind is also used by Plato against the teaching of Protagoras that all knowledge is only subjective appearance and opinion, against the assertion of Antisthenes that there is nothing beyond the material senses and against the thesis of Aristippus that all sense of value is a sheer individual experience. By proposing universally valid, non-sentient, and apriori contents of our mind, Plato knocks the props from under relativism, phenomenism, sensualism, and the individualism of value. Even the most subjective emotions of our senses and of our cravings (*φαίνεσθαι*, *αἰσθάνεσθαι*, *παρὸν πάθος*) are never without the universally valid, non-sensory, logical, and ethical categories; and this of course renders sensualism and individualism in the realm of values untenable. Plato is the first great adversary of materialism. Later philosophers constantly take refuge in his arguments.

**Sensation and reasoning.** The relation between sensation and reasoning can now be more distinctly drawn. When we present Plato as a rationalist and idealist, we should not picture him as if

he were forced to stalk blindly through the world and as if he did not wish to avail himself of the senses. On the contrary, they play a great part in his theory of knowledge. He was accustomed to say that we think and we know "by means of the senses," "starting with the senses," "by taking the senses into consideration." But what kind of a role is this? P. Natorp and the neo-Kantian interpreters of Plato believe that we can think of this role much as we would think of it in Kantian philosophy. The senses should furnish the material of experience, while the mind, by means of its aprioristic elements, should classify this material and thus make experiences possible. Of course, the ideas of Plato are not empty forms and functions but finished contents, and we are not dealing with a limited number of original and basic functions (categories) but with an unlimited assortment of notions: all knowledge of being and essence is apriori. For this reason there remains nothing that can be classified or arranged. The contents of knowledge are complete in their existence. They must only be made known. This is accomplished by the senses.

Plato enlarges upon this theme very cleverly in the *Phaedo*: When I see the picture of a friend, it reminds me of him insofar as it affords me the occasion actually to think of him in the way I had already known about him potentially. Pictures do not supply me with a likeness of my friends; I already possessed that. They are responsible solely for the fact that I become conscious of the aprioristic content which I already possess. And this is also true whenever I see a straight line, a circle, a square, a man, a beast, a plant, or anything else. As a consequence, in the works of Plato sensation is considered to be a copy. And just as we are able to understand a picture solely by reason of the object from which it was copied, so we must refer all our sense perceptions to a prototype of which the perceptions are copies. To express this idea more clearly, Plato coined the expression *participation* (*μέθεξις*). The cognitional, theoretical meaning of this concept signifies that all knowledge in the experimental, dimensional world is an "analogism": an interpretation of sense perceptions by referring them to a prototypal notion (*ἀντίλογον*), as this is stated definitely in *Theaetetus* (186 a 10 and c 3). It is evident, then, that for Plato the role of the senses is a very limited one. The senses are not causes of the content of our knowledge. They are also not the sources; they are only the occasions of our being conscious of ideas.

It is very instructive to compare Plato and Kant on this particular question. Both busy themselves with apriori factors. Whereas in Kant the forms alone are apriori, in Plato their content is also. In Kant the content of knowledge is acquired; in Plato it is already existent. According to Kant the senses actually afford material for the content of knowledge; according to Plato they contribute nothing to that content. Kant represents a union of empiricism and rationalism; Plato is a pure rationalist.

**Doxa (opinion).** If a person should prove incapable of elevating himself from sense knowledge to the ideas and remain bound by sense perception as such, his knowledge is not true knowledge but rather opinion ( $\delta\circ\xi\alpha$ ). If knowledge remains stationary in the sense world and is based exclusively on it, the possessor of such knowledge would deal exclusively within the realm of the changeable and never arrive at true knowledge, because his knowledge would never attain to propositions and truths which remain eternally the same. Just as Hume would later characterize purely empirical and natural scientific knowledge as belief, so Plato designates it as sheer belief ( $\pi\circ\sigma\tau\circ\sigma$ ). Both reached this conclusion from the same consideration as starting point, namely, we can never be sure of the constancy of natural events. A second reason why, according to Plato, empirical knowledge is only opinion lies in man's lack of insight into the facts of a case. We may accidentally or through "divine providence" chance upon the truth, but if we do not know positively the connections existing between the arguments, we do not possess true wisdom, but we know only by conjecture or by pure chance. But we cannot rely on this. Plato, however, does concede that we must be resigned to the fact that the great majority of people do not know better. If an opinion accidentally true does not present true knowledge, it is still something more than non-knowledge or nescience. The ideal still would be a true insight into the eternal, unchangeable truths, into ideas and notions.

### 3. OBJECTS OF KNOWLEDGE: IDEAS

To the apriori notions of our minds correspond suitable objects. This world of objects interested Plato as much as did his search for the source of knowledge.

**The fact of ideas.** Plato proved with clarity that the unchangeability of our intellectual certitudes stemmed from the fact that speculation concerns itself with objects which of themselves are absolutely

unchangeable. "When returning into herself she [the soul] reflects, then she passes into the other world, the region of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she lives, when she is by herself, and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging" (*Phaedo*, 79 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 464). These are the objects which are "ever on our lips," the beautiful-in-itself, the good-in-itself, health-in-itself, strength-in-itself, the same, the large- and the small-in-themselves, in fact every kind of essence. "They are each of them always what they are, having the same simple self-existent and unchangeable forms, not admitting of variation at all, or in any way, or at any time" (*Phaedo*, 79 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 463). They are uniform, eternal, immortal, and divine. These are his ideas (*ἰδέαι*, *εἴδη*, *μορφαί*, *αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα*). "Idea," therefore, has a double meaning: first, it is a thought (a subjective idea); and second, it is the object of which we think (objective idea). We spoke of the idea in the first-named meaning when we discussed the source of truth. Of the idea in the second sense we will now speak when we center our attention on the world of objects.

That Plato took ideas for granted is known to all, but we must make sure of certain facts, because the neo-Kantian interpretation of Plato seeks to explain his theory to mean that ultimately he rejects the idea as something objectively real. According to the philosophers of this school (e.g., Natorp, Cassirer, Bauch, Hoenigswald), the ideas are objects of knowledge but "objects" of knowledge as Kant understood "object," namely, as a limitation of thought. They are not discovered by the process of thinking, but they are created because of the spontaneous functions peculiar to speculation. The idea here wanders into the mind; it is a child of the mind; the idea is subservient to the mind, not the mind to the idea. This would be another typical instance of modern misinterpretation. No Greek ever reasoned like that. He always understood the "object" realistically and dualistically, set it up in opposition to the mind, and not only for the duration of a momentary thought but to the mind as such. In antiquity the individual was not so egotistic as to imagine that the world had to conform itself to him. He conformed himself to the world. "For there are other things much more divine in their nature even than man" (Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1141 b, 1; ed. McKeon, p. 1028). As a consequence, we must agree that the Platonic ideas are something real, and by them we understand those realities which as

eternally unchangeable objects of true knowledge arise by virtue of the pre-existential glimpse we had of them in the pure reason.

**Qualities.** The Platonic idea is something non-spatial, timeless, unchangeable, accessible only to speculation. But we would like to know from the very start what kind of reality the ideas possess. It is apparent that their reality is not the reality of sensory, spatial, and temporal things (*res extensa*). They furthermore lack any psychic reality (*res cogitans*). The *Symposium*, 211 a, 7, establishes that the idea is neither actual thought nor knowledge. Its reality is rather of the ideal order. What this ideal reality is, we learn by being given examples of mathematical and logical associations of validity. Propositions such as  $2 \times 2$  are 4, the proposition that the sides of an equiangular triangle are equal to each other, etc., cannot be changed by any power in this world. They are not in time. It would be useless to ask when they began to be valid and whether, if the world ceased to be, they too would lose their validity. Not even God is able to alter the significance of their validity. As Bolzano expressed it, they are "propositions which hold true for God Himself."

**Mundus intelligibilis — the Intelligible World.** This ideal reality is stronger than all other reality; for the material world will have long disappeared, but these propositions will still be valid. They contain, furthermore, the sublime structural plans of the world without being in any way dependent upon them. The material world is something else: it has its own gravity; it errs and has its failures; but it is nevertheless dominated and ruled by the "artfulness of the idea" as Hegel will declare later on. Plato would truthfully say that this material world exists by grace of the idea.

1) *The character of reality in the world of ideas.* Consequently Plato recognizes in ideal reality true reality, the ὁντως ὁν. As for Leibniz, so also for him, the true circle is not the one that is drawn on the blackboard but the ideal circle. Only for the latter are the laws of the circle valid. The former does not fulfill the conditions for these laws, because its line is protracted and it can never be perfectly round; and thus it is for all other ideas. Has there ever been a man who has fully exhausted the idea of man, an absolutely perfect man? In the kingdom of nature do not the plants, flowers, beasts, and even inanimate beings with their numberless species always have room, despite their own abundance, to exhibit ever anew the richness of the idea of species in ever new individuals, because the idea itself is inexhaustible? And it is inexhaustible because it

alone is perfect, genuine, and true reality; whereas all else strives to reproduce it, but in the attempt arrives only at an approximation and an approximate value of it, never at its true value and its essence itself. From the senses then is derived the knowledge that "All sensible things aim at an absolute equality of which they fall short" (*Phaedo*, 75 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 459). Indeed, because of its inexhaustibly rich productive fruitfulness, the world of ideas is the starker reality. For this reason Plato differentiates between the world of ideas (*κόσμος νοητός, mundus intelligibilis*, the intelligible world) and the visible world (*τόπος ὄπατός, mundus sensibilis*, the world of sense) and sees in the world of ideas the true and real world, while in the sensible world he perceives only a copy which stands midway between being and non-being. Although we might approach the meaning of the ideal reality by means of the mathematical notion of the significance of validity, it would never be in consonance with the spirit of Plato's philosophy if we looked upon the idea simply as logical validity, as Lotze has done. For the modern notion of logical validity denotes a certain diminution of the degree of reality, since modern speculation is accustomed to see true reality only in physical reality. It is just the opposite for Plato: to him ideal reality is not a diminution of the degree of reality, but full and perfect reality.

2) *The content of the world of ideas.* Insofar as the content of the world of ideas is concerned, in the beginning Plato spoke only of the ideas of the good, the beautiful, the just as such, and of other ethico-aesthetical ideals. But the *Phaedo* reveals ideas of logico-ontological relations, for example, the idea of equality, difference, opposition, and finally the idea of all essences in general. Through this the doctrine of ideas was expanded to include the whole realm of being—also nature and art—for essences are to be found everywhere. In the *Parmenides* (130 c, d) and the *Sophist* (227 a, b), if Plato writes as if he were forced by necessity to accept the idea of a hair, of dirt, and of lice, and of other things of little value, we should not forget that his doctrine of ideas was originally a doctrine of ideals; but we may not believe that he changed the character of his doctrine of ideas in his old age. He expressed only more clearly what he could have said earlier in the *Phaedo*, where the idea already represented to him everything without exception—all that we are able "to seal" by such terms as "in itself" or "the essence." The idea, therefore, stood for the quiddity of a being; it was what determined a being to a precise and determinate mode (*Soseinsbestimmtheit*) (75 d).

Quite logically, then, we must also assume, using modern terminology, the idea of Satan. Does such an idea actually fit into the world of ideas and does it trace its origin ultimately to the idea of the good? By asking this question we come into contact with the problem which we mentioned before (see p. 76). How is it possible for all beings to be good? Here we can see how Plato's notion ran into difficulties; in the beginning the idea was valid only for a limited area of being and was useful within it, but now it is expanded too broadly and is extended to embrace still more areas of being, and by such a generalization it runs into grave *aporias* or philosophical difficulties.

**The World of Science.** For Plato, the world of ideas, considered as the true world, was also the world of science and of truth. We need but recall the citation in the *Phaedo* to which we have already referred. There we learned that when the soul left to itself seeks to understand being, it ceases to err, because it is occupied in the realm of objects which are always identical with themselves. "And this state of soul is called wisdom" (*Phaedo*, 79 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 464). In the world of ideas truth is always in its proper place, and it is in this world that the scientific theses and laws are properly valid. But they are not strictly true in the world of sense experience. Protagoras said (Frag. 7) that the law of tangents might not be valid because the line of the circle, which we draw, rests on more than one point. For the physical world this would be true, but we should, nevertheless, not abandon the law. By means of it we are able to prove that we assume a world of objects other than sensible—an expanded world, namely, the ideal world of objects. Furthermore, it is not true only of the world of mathematics. Every natural science takes into account average values. With their acceptance, we leave the world of pure factual findings. If we were to retain them, we would be forced to adhere firmly to individual results arrived at by facts. These alone are actually given. By accepting average value, we exceed the positive given fact. If we accept, for example, the established specific weight of antimony, then measurements of actual specimens would give figures differing from 6.72. In one experiment we might reach a higher, in another a lower figure. Only these varying results are discovered as proved fact and are truly positively factual. The average value, on the other hand, is arrived at by calculation and is actually a *coup d'état* in view of sensible reality and its rights. Here the ideal world is introduced and put in place of the

given fact. This is true of the conclusions of all the natural sciences, not only of the theoretical or ideal sciences. Plato was the first to discover the world of science and of truth and he disagreed with the judgment of every day that the object of science should be the immediate, sensory physical world. Long before the immediate proved fact became a problem for the neo-positivists of the Vienna circle—upon which the positivists wished to base science—Plato perceived that there is no such thing as the proved fact which may be found immediately and directly in the experience of the senses.

**The Allegory of the Cave.** Plato very graphically illustrated his thoughts on truth and reality by his famous figure of the "underground cave" (*Rep.*, Book VII, 514 ff.; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 773). He writes in the *Republic* that it is much as if men were prisoners in an underground den, who from childhood have been chained to a bench so that they cannot move and can see only the wall opposite the entrance. And behind them, toward the entry way, there ran through the cave a wall as high as a man; and behind the wall burned a fire. When between the fire and the wall men passed to and fro carrying pictures, statues, figures of animals, and all kinds of vessels which appeared above the wall, the shadows caused by the fire were thrown against the wall of the cave, and from there the chained prisoners would also hear the echoes of the sounds by which the men passing by spoke with one another. Since the prisoners were unable to perceive anything but shadows and echoes, they naturally imagined that these were actual realities. If for some reason they were enabled to turn around and to examine in the light of the fire the objects of which they had been able to see only the shadows, and if they were permitted to hear the actual voices instead of the echoes only, they would certainly be astonished at the new reality confronting them. And if they were allowed to leave the cave and in the light of the sun to inspect living human beings and animals and the objects which had been carried by the men, but of which they had seen in the cave only shadowy reflections, they would indeed be blinded by the reality which had put on still another guise. If these fortunate ones who had been so briefly released related their experiences to the prisoners who had not been so fortunate, and if they maintained that what these unfortunates had actually seen and heard did not represent actual reality, they would not be believed and in the end would be scoffed at for their pains. And if some altruistic soul should attempt to free the prisoners from their bonds and lead

them into the light of day, his good intentions might possibly cost him his life.

The prisoners, nevertheless, must be released from the cave. This is the prime duty of the philosopher: to liberate men from the physical, material world—the world of appearances—and from the shadows of unreality and to bring them into the realm of true being. This true being is indeed not the so-called real, space-time world which lies under the earthly sun. This is only a copy. The really true world of being is the world of ideas. The first copy of this true world, corresponding to the objects which were carried behind the low wall in the cave, is the space-time world. A copy of this last-named kind of being, and consequently a copy of a copy, corresponding to the shadows on the wall, is the world of imitation and of counterfeit.

The core of this figure or allegory is not only the thought that there are various classes or strata of being but also another idea, namely, that one strata rests upon another. The shadowy world rises upon the space-time being of the physico-real world; this, in turn, rears itself upon ideal being. For Plato, that upon which something rests, and by which it can alone be conceived and can be, is the hypothesis (*ὑπόθεσις*); that is, a being that must first be postulated if any further being is to exist at all.

**The Absolute.** 1) *The idea of ideas.* The concept of hypothesis is not limited to the relation of the various strata of being, but is referred also to the relation of ideas one to another (*Rep.*, 509 ff.). There are subordinate ideas, depending upon superior ones on which they are based and supported. And since a great number of subordinate ideas have their presuppositions and foundations in superior ones, and of these superiors some are founded upon a further and still more sublime idea, the basic ideas, as in a genealogical tree, become ever fewer and fewer. But by that very fact the basic ideas become also more powerful, because they are both extensively and intensively greater. Finally we arrive at the summit of the pyramid of ideas, at the idea of ideas upon which all other ideas depend and are based, because, embracing as it does all others, it also offers a foundation for all. Just as the sun bestows upon all things in the realm of the visible world being and life and perceptibility, so in the realm of the invisible the idea of ideas bestows upon being its essence and its discernibility. This supreme idea is dependent upon no other. It is absolute (*ἀνυπόθετος*: *Rep.*, 510 b; 511 b) and self-sufficient

(ἰκανόν: *Phaedo*, 101 e). As a consequence, it is no longer being in the accepted sense. For all being there must be a basis; the absolute, however, is of a different kind. It exists of itself and by itself and is as a result beyond all being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας); it exceeds all other being both in power and in dignity. With this we arrive again at the idea of the good as it is in itself, to which we had ascended when dealing with the problems bearing on ethical value.

2) *The effects of this theory on the history of philosophy.* With these concepts we find ourselves at the source of the philosophical views which are found in every stage of the history of philosophy. Related more or less directly to them are the differentiations between absolute and contingent being, the *ens a se* and the *ens ab alio*, the notion of a *ratio sufficiens* for all beings, and the postulate of a supreme cosmic First Cause, the proofs for the existence of God based on causality and contingency, the identification of the concept of God with the idea of a *summum bonum*, the interpretation of God as the *implicatio* of the world and of the world as the *explicatio* of God, the notion of emanation, the discussion of the one and the many (ἐν καὶ πᾶν), the proof for the existence of God based on the degrees of perfection, the idea of the supremely perfect being, etc.

**Dialectics.** If in the metaphysics of Plato all being depends for existence on and is understood only by the supreme idea, it is only natural that the first task of philosophy should be to discover all those ideas which are latent in every being and to investigate their range and ramifications. This task was the origin of the Platonic dialectic. It is the explanation of being through the Logos as the basis of being.

1) *The logical side.* In the Platonic dialectic we first generally view the logical aspect; the later Dialogues in particular show Plato's out-spoken interest in dialectics in this logical sense. This is actually a fact and in this context the idea for Plato has chiefly a logical meaning. The idea is a notion and as such exhibits a series of logical contents by which the mode of one being (*ποῖον, quale, quidditas*) is characterized in contradiction to something else (*ἕτερον, aliud*). As a universal concept, the idea is also a genus and a species and is connected with other subordinate, superior, and co-ordinate notions.

To examine this intermixture of ideas (*κοινωνία τῶν γενῶν* = "community of kinds") is the task of dialectics: "Should we not say that the division according to classes, which neither makes the same other, nor makes the other the same, is the business of the dialectical science? . . . Then, surely, he who can divide rightly is able to see

clearly one form [idea] pervading a scattered multitude, and many different forms [ideas] contained under one higher form [idea]; and again, one form [idea] knit together into a single whole and pervading many such wholes, and many forms [ideas], existing only in separation and isolation. This is the knowledge of classes which determines where they can have communion with one another and where not" (*Sophist*, 253 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 262). In this procedure we may follow a descending scale (from top to bottom) by "dividing" the universal notion of genus into various species, and by dividing these again until we arrive at the *individuum*, "that which cannot be divided any further": *Diairesis*. An example of this is the definition of the notion of an angler, which occurs in the *Sophist* (219 a ff.). Or this procedure may be in the ascending scale (from the bottom to the top) by abstracting the universal from the particular, and from this universal the still more universal, and so on until we finally arrive at the most universal idea possible which includes all being: dialectics in the strict sense.

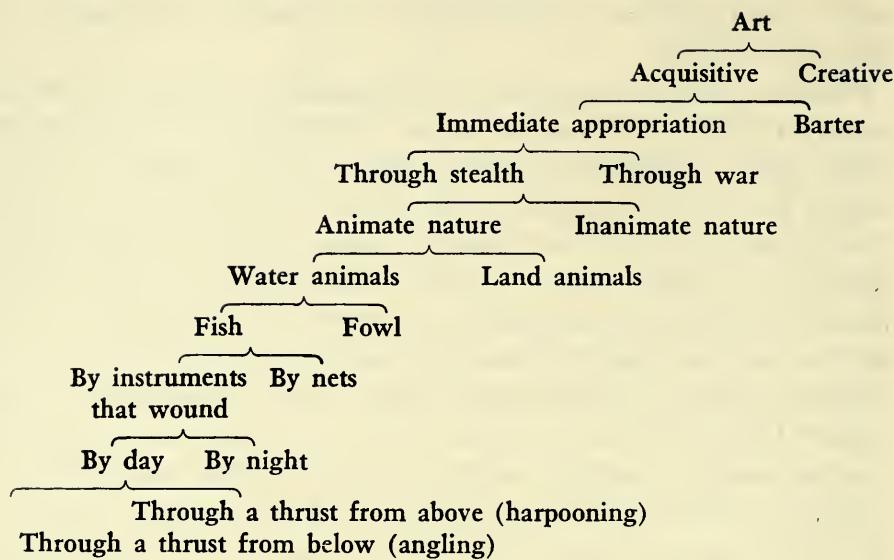
2) *The metaphysical meaning.* But Plato was less concerned with the logical relations of notions in regard to content and extension than with the Logos as hypothesis, as the foundational basis of being. His dialectics stands in the service of his metaphysics. If in his later Dialogues Plato turns to logical problems, we should not think that this constitutes a break in his philosophical system, but rather that it is the completion of what he had already begun and for which he had prepared the way. If there are ideas, as the Dialogues of his mature years propose—namely, the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, and the *Republic*—if these are the ontological bases for other beings, and if as a consequence of this interdependence of ideas ever wider ontological bases begin to appear; if, finally, an idea of an idea exists as the ultimate foundation of being, Plato is then forced to occupy himself with the apparatus of his Logos which supports everything. This is not playing with an idea for the sake of the ideas, as we sometimes do in arithmetical games, but it is an attempt to explain the whole gamut of being by presenting the structural idea behind the world. Dialectics is "pure" physics, "pure" biology, "pure" anthropology, because it affords us all the a priori truths necessary for the various departments of science and with this the most fundamental relationships of being. Finally, we are dealing here with evidence for the footprints of God, insofar as dialectics surveys the whole of being.

and in being discovers everywhere the presence (*Parousia*) of the idea of the Good.

Platonic dialectics represents an *itinerarium mentis in Deum*, a journey of the mind to God, as we can clearly see in the *Republic* (511), even if Plato does not literally use the name of God but instead employs the expression, the idea of the Good. We ascend, as it were, step by step from *eidos* to *eidos* (form to form) until we reach the *Anhypotheton*, or the Unconditioned First Principle, because all the steps, supported as they are by Him, lead to Him; and we can also descend from Him and everywhere find a way out, because all being has its source in His riches and thereby is "hypothesized" (*ὑπόθεσις*). The *Republic* had demanded that the kings be true philosophers and be versed in examining the profoundest relationships of being and recognize everywhere in the world and in life the irradiations of the idea of the Good itself. It also required that they make possible such an insight for others, so that by aid of these eternal prototypes each one might mold his own true self on the bases of truth and propriety. Thus for Plato dialectics is truly much more than logic; it is always metaphysics and as such it becomes the foundation of ethics, pedagogy, and politics.

**The One and the Many.** Dialectics, then, for Plato denotes an attempt to solve the great metaphysical problems propounded by Heraclitus and the Eleatics. For the former there is only variety; there is no unity and no universal. For the latter there exists only identity; multiplicity and variety are considered simply as non-being. We must draw up in outline a Platonic *diairesis* (division) to understand how by it Plato intended to overcome these differentiations and difficulties. We take as sample the dialectic definition of an angler from the *Sophist* (219 ff.), which is reached by dissecting the universal idea of art into its component parts. These are again subdivided into still minuter segments until the sought-for notion is uncovered.

By closely scrutinizing this analysis, three things become apparent to us. (1) It is with reason that we speak of unity when treating of multiplicity, because the universal genus includes in its very universality everything that is comprised under it. And it is equally significant that we speak of multiplicity, because alongside the universal there also appears the particular. (2) Furthermore, it is quite meaningful that we term everything identical, at least in this respect



that each unit of all so-called multiplicity (plurality) essentially participates in species and idea and thus insofar is identical; on the other hand the outline and its systematical division show precisely that, together with the thoroughly essential and identical idea, there appear others differing from it. (3) And finally it becomes clear that every being is at the same time a non-being. I can rightly call what is a being also a non-being in respect to another, because it is not that other. Having thoroughly examined the mystery of the community of ideas, we come to the realization that an "either-or" is not correct: either Heraclitus or the Eleatics, either one or the many, either identity or differentiation. The right answer is "as well as." Each school saw something of the truth; both aspects do positively exist: unity and plurality, identity and differentiation, being and non-being. And the key which permits the synthesis that bridges these antitheses is the idea of participation. This key makes us aware of identity, but it does not overlook differentiation.

**Meanings of the Idea.** 1) *Concept*. From what has been said, we can finally establish rather easily the different meanings which are attached to the idea in the works of Plato. We have already treated of its logical meaning: The idea is a universal concept ( $\lambdaόγος$ ). This is the heritage bequeathed it by Socrates. But the "concept" is not modern in the sense that it must be understood as the sum of certain notes. It is rather to be understood as the uniform, spiritual, and intuitive form which possesses universal validity.

2) *Essences*. To Plato a second meaning is even more important. The idea is always also an essence (*οὐσία*), and therefore signifies the thing itself in its true being (*αὐτό τὸ πρᾶγμα*). It has been already stated, however, that being here means ideal being, being of the ideal order.

3) *Cause*. Third, the idea is a cause (*αἰτία*). It is this as a presupposition, as a hypothesis. In this sense it becomes the reason for being. Cause in this sense is likened to *ratio*. That which has been placed as a foundation shares in the being of that which placed the foundation (*μέθεξις*); it exists because the reason is present in it (*παρονοία*). Plato permits his Socrates to explain that he was unable to promise himself a true enlightenment concerning the world drawn from material causes which the pre-Socratic school had advanced, and that for this reason he had turned to the ideas as "a second course." The ideas form a new kind of cause, the eidetical or ideal cause. We can best represent it to ourselves if we meditate on the relationship of a picture to the object that is depicted in it. The object portrayed is together with its form (*εἶδος*) the cause of the *eidos* (form) of the picture. The latter partakes of the former; the former is present in the latter. The *Timaeus* establishes quite clearly that the whole world is nothing but a copy. The Demiurge created all things in accordance with the eternal ideas.

4) *Purpose*. From this there follows still a fourth meaning of idea, namely, its character as goal or purpose (*τέλος*). Because of it there is always something else. It is a "that for the sake of which" (*οὐ ἔνεκα*). Expressed more generally: All being has a meaning and through this meaning it is always referred to something else superior to it. It is a striving and a longing (*όρεγεσθαι, προθυμεῖσθαι*) for the more sublime in the world: "all sensible things strive to be like the idea" (*Phaedo*, 75 a, b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 459). So far as the idea is intended as a purpose, it appears to be a value (*ἀγαθόν*). Through this concept of the idea, a teleological feature is introduced into Platonic metaphysics. Plato explains the inferior by the superior, not vice versa. The higher species, for him, does not come into being through evolution from lower forms. A descent of species on the basis of mechanical causes, such as Darwin assumes, would represent to Plato not evolution but a tremendous chaos. "Where brute force holds sway senselessly, formation becomes impossible." As a consequence, for him all evolution must be guided from above by an anticipation of meaning and of purpose. Plato is a representative of

an ideal morphology. In this respect the statement recorded in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the word" (Logos) has a meaning and accords with the facts. What Anaxagoras had not fully developed in his philosophy, namely his failure to make the final cause a cause which would be regulative of all things, as Plato remarked in criticism, Plato himself completed: everything that is subordinated exists because of something more sublime, and so forth, until we finally arrive at the absolute. Because of this absolute, everything finally comes into existence. And thus the entire universe is a cosmos, a pyramid of being, in which everything that somehow exists has a relationship to and an association with the summit. Everything on the pyramid endeavors to gain the summit and loves it. On this love the being of the world is dependent and is nourished. Being itself is nothing more than a striving after and a quiescence in the idea and consequently in the idea of ideas. "And all strength and all striving are eternal repose in God, the Lord."

**Ideas as numbers.** 1) *Ideal numbers.* Aristotle informs us more than once and in express terms that for Plato the ideas were numbers. In the Dialogues of his mature years and especially in the lecture of his old age, "On the Good," which has been lost, Plato devotes his attention in an intense fashion to the relation between ideas and numbers. To reach a definite conclusion on this vexing problem and controversial issue, we should keep before our eyes the diairetical outline which has been sketched on a previous page, and we should bear in mind two important statements of Plato which are reported for us in the *Statesman* (287 e; 285 a ff.) and the *Philebus* (16 d, e). According to these statements we may not arbitrarily dissect an idea, but must divide it in a manner that befits its natural structure, much after the fashion in which an anatomist dissects a body according to the technique of his own science. This means that we may not extract from an idea any more or any less than what is actually contained within it. If in the dialectical process we should, furthermore, descend from species to species until we reached the definitely final species (*ἀτομον εἶδος*: "indivisible form") which cannot be divided into still other more subordinate species because this ultimate species embraces only individuals under it, we would never be permitted to omit a species or to add others by perhaps overlooking the fact that in this or in that object a new species is present or has not as yet emerged.

Whatever, therefore, appears to be new in the way of a new

species or idea can be precisely regulated by an arithmetical process and can actually be counted. In other words: every idea corresponds to a number if we descend correctly by means of a dialectical process from the idea of the good in itself, of the one, as it will be called later, without omitting an idea or adding others that do not pertain. If we were to employ modern terminology, we would be able to insert these with a place number and with a place value into a system of co-ordinates. This mathematical value includes whatever is determinative and differentiating for the idea. It delimits it in relation to what is logically another and also in relation to the empty mathematical or physical space, as we would say today; a relation to a more or less, to a bigger or smaller, as Plato was accustomed to say. This mathematical value is something unique in contrast to an indeterminate duality. By this we have the ideal number. It has, as we can immediately see, a qualitative character. It is consequently immeasurable and as a result it is something different from purely mathematical numbers which are differentiated from one another quantitatively and not qualitatively, and which can, therefore, be added.

2) *Monas and Dyas*. By such a theory Plato subsumes two new principles: the one (*évás, μονάς*) and the indeterminate duality (*ἀόριστος δύάς*). These are not only actively present in every idea but are valid also for being in general. And since they constitute the essence of being and thereby also determine the successive procession of the idea from the one, they are two principles by which both ideas and being are generated.

3) *Plato and the Pythagoreans*. By this conception the Pythagorean tendencies reappear in the speculation of Plato in his later years. For this reason Aristotle in this connection always mentions the Pythagoreans and Plato in the same breath. Plato himself had clearly pointed out the line of demarcation between his ideal numbers and the doctrine of numbers envisaged by Pythagoras. The numbers which the "accomplished men" (*Statesman*, 285 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 312) take for granted as expressive of individual objects were arbitrarily chosen and actually formed a kind of game. Thus, they saw in the number 4 justice, in 5 marriage, in 7 *kairos* or right proportion. Plato demanded, however, that the numbers follow precisely the gradual ontological procession of the single ideas from the good in itself or from the one.

4) *Mathematical numbers*. We might ask whether or not the mathematical numbers themselves also do not have their origin in a

principle. The *Epinomis*, which preserves a great portion of a lecture that Plato gave in his old age, "On the Good," shows that the natural series of numbers does actually trace its rise to the One and to the "pacemaker," that is, to the doubling and the halving nature of duality (990 c). The older Academy fully discussed the derivation of the mathematical from the ideal numbers and their reciprocal relations. Aristotle, especially (*Meta.*, XI, 6 ff.), showed himself at variance with his master on this question.

**Aristotle on the origin of the doctrine of ideas.** Concerning the origin and the meaning of the doctrine of ideas we possess a very detailed account in the work of Aristotle: "Having in his youth first become familiar with Cratylus and with the Heraclitean doctrines (that all sensible things are ever in a state of flux and there is no knowledge about them), these views he held even in his later years. Socrates, however, was busying himself about ethical matters and . . . fixed thought for the first time on definitions; Plato accepted his teaching, but held that the problem applied not to sensible things but to entities of another kind—for this reason, that the common definition could not be a definition of any sensible thing, as they were always changing. Things of this other sort, then, he called Ideas, and sensible things, he said were all named after these, and in virtue of a relation to these; for the many existed by participation in the Ideas that have the same name as they" (*Meta.*, I, 6, 987 a 31–987 b 10; ed. McKeon, pp. 700–701). Looked at historically, the doctrine of ideas is actually, as Aristotle maintains, the result of a controversy between Heraclitus on the one hand and Socrates on the other. From Heraclitus, Plato derived his evaluation of the visible, sensible world; from Socrates, the retention of truth and science in general, and of universally valid notions in particular. If there are such things as universally valid certitudes, there also must be corresponding correlatives to them, objective thinkable objects, the ideas, as Aristotle so rightly stresses. The basic reason that "there must be a corresponding object" lies in the epistemological realism and dualism which were characteristic of the whole of ancient philosophy, and for which Parmenides had coined the classical formula: the same object is both thought and being. Thus for Plato there arose an entirely new world. This new land was further developed by his realism in the realm of the theory of cognition by which he represented to himself as an object only that which speculation had already found to be present and

which is apriori to his speculation. That these ideas are unchangeable and are eternally identical with themselves follows simply from the same supposition. In his own personal objective reasoning he had always been confronted by ideas that were identical to themselves. For this reason the objects which pertained to them must be also of the same kind. The decisive element in his doctrine of ideas can be found, therefore, in the proof for the apriority of the content of our knowledge. The world of ideas comes into existence at that moment when the mind recognizes the existence of universally valid apriori certitudes that are opposed to sense experience which is merely subjectively valuable. Then, on the basis of a realistic theory of knowledge, objects corresponding to these certitudes are postulated as actually existent. It is quite true that in the beginning the ideas were only the ethico-aesthetic ideals. But it was precisely in this sphere that for Socrates—as Aristotle notes again so correctly—and consequently also for Plato, the universally valid concepts become intelligible for the first time.

**Chorismos or separation.** Aristotle maintains that the idea was separated from sensible objects by a chasm. Sensible objects stand alongside and outside of things ( $\tauὰ\ δὲ\ αἰσθητὰ\ παρὰ\ τὰ\ νῦν$ ). By such a conception the world would veritably be torn in twain. The ideas sway, so to speak, above the world. As a consequence, the mediaeval thinkers called them separated forms, *formae separatae* and so Raphael in his masterpiece, the “School of Athens,” painted Plato with his face raised toward the heavens looking to the “supercelestial region,” that is, to the world of ideas; while Aristotle looks at the material world, recognizing that only there is true reality to be found. By this separation of the universal and by its consequent autonomy, Plato differs from Socrates, as Aristotle so aptly remarks. The latter accepted the universal, but he would have left it in the real space-time world; whereas Plato separated it from, and thus doubled, the world. According to Plato, the space-time world of the senses has an actual share or participation (*methexis*) in the world of ideas, because it is a copy of the ideal prototypes and because the Demiurge had created the universe on the basis of these eternal ideas; and whatever the things of the sensible world actually are, they exist *de facto* only by participation in the idea. The world of ideas, nevertheless, is always something distinct, something proper, alone being in the true sense of the word; whereas the sensible world is only an illusion, a mean

between being and non-being. This chasm between the world of ideas and the sensible world disturbed Aristotle greatly and he thought of it as a duplication of the world. It has been the subject of dispute whether or not Aristotle correctly interpreted the meaning of the doctrine of ideas. In any case Plato could answer: "I did not intend to multiply the world, for to me the visible world does not represent true reality. For Aristotle it does; and so from his standpoint, and only from his standpoint, does such a duplication take place."

For Plato, nevertheless, the material world recedes into an unreal illusion. This world is not being but only the copy of an idea. That which for Aristotle denoted the real world was to be found for Plato only in the idea and only through it.

But can Plato persist in holding to this explanation? Is sensible reality actually nothing more than the copy of an idea? If without it there can be no emergence of any ideas at all, and if without a definite perception of the senses there can be no emergence of a definite idea, is its meaning after all so trivial? Whether this meaning denotes an occasion or a cause is unimportant, for at least for Plato there can be no knowledge of ideas without sensible reality. And if this sensible reality is actually only an illusion, why must the idea appear through a sensible thing at all? Why do we not possess only ideas, if the only really true world is the world of ideas? Sensible reality created the same kind of a difficulty for Plato that the problem of evil had.

# CHAPTER 6

## PLATO — II

### MAN

After this consideration of the general theory of knowledge and of the basic ontological theories of Plato, we turn to other more concrete problems, and, first of all, to his speculation concerning man.

#### 1. MAN IS SOUL

“Now we must believe the legislator when he tells us that the soul is in all respects superior to the body, and that even in life what makes each one of us to be what we are is only the soul; and that the body follows us about in the likeness of each of us, and therefore, when we are dead, the bodies of the dead are quite rightly said to be our shades or images; for the true and immortal being of each one of us which is called the soul goes on her way to other Gods, before them to give an account” (*Laws*, 959; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 693).

To Plato, man is a composite of body and soul. But how should this composition be understood? It is a very loose union. The body is only a kind of vehicle for the soul and thus it has only an accidental relation to it. Consequently weight is not evenly distributed; the soul is the true man, the body is only a shadow. The union is, moreover, an unhappy one. The soul languishes in the body as in a prison, and the body is burdensome to the soul. “While we are in the body, and while the soul is infected with the evils of the body, our desire will not be satisfied and our desire is of the truth. For the body is the source of endless troubles to us by reason of the mere requirement of food; and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search after true being; it fills us full of loves and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless folly, and in fact, as men say, takes away from us the power of thinking at all. Whence come wars, and fighting and factions? Whence but from the body and the lusts of the body? Wars are

occasioned by the love of money, and money has to be acquired for the sake and in the service of the body" (*Phaedo*, 66 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, pp. 449-450).

Plato actually repeats the dictum of the Pythagoreans: the body is the sepulcher of the soul ( $\sigmaῶμα$ , "body"— $\sigmaῆμα$ , "sepulcher"). Thus we can understand his demand that we become only so closely associated with the body as is actually necessary, that we should never permit ourselves to become saturated with it and its nature. We should hold ourselves aloof from it, "until God redeems us completely from it."

Consequently the entire interest of Plato in man is concentrated on the soul, and his philosophical anthropology is essentially psychology. Let us listen, then, to his solution of the problem relating to the origin of the soul, its essence, and its fate. There is a great deal of mythological phraseology in which it is wrapped—this can readily be discerned—but the philosophical kernel can nevertheless be laid bare.

## 2. THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

The origin of the soul can be traced to the Demiurge. He "sows the seed, and made a beginning" (*Timaeus*, 41 ff., ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 23). The human soul is not drawn from the world-soul as a part or an emanation or an offshoot. It is true that some of the components out of which the world-soul is constituted have been "mixed up," even if not in the same proportion, into its constitution: on the one hand elements that are indivisible, eternal, unchanging, and unchangeable; and on the other, elements that are divisible as well as the reality that is constantly changing. But the human soul is truly formed by the Demiurge himself, just as the world-soul originates from him (*Timaeus*, 41 ff.). Plato is therefore neither an emanationist nor a pantheist. Each soul is something singular. Each has its star, there is its home; and there are as many souls as there are stars. The Demiurge has placed them in these stars as in a chariot and he has granted to each of them a view of the nature of the universe and has made known to each of them the unchangeable laws of destiny. This is no astrological fancy, but an expression of Plato's conviction that by virtue of its natural powers the soul *a priori* knows eternal truths and values, so that it is able to prescribe its own ideals for life and for the world. Plato was of the opinion that a glimpse of the starry heavens filled the heart of man with wonderment and imparted

to him an intimation of supermundane norms. To this extent the soul's coming into existence was in the hands of God. If the soul were entirely the work of God, it would almost necessarily become entirely divine. But this could not be. Consequently the Demiurge entrusts it for its future journey to the care of the "created gods"—that is, the earth and the planets, "the instruments of time"—so that they might call the souls into existence, clothe them with bodies, nourish them and permit them to grow, and finally receive back again the children of men when they disappeared from the face of the earth. This was the first birth of the soul in this space-time world. Other births would follow, as we shall see immediately.

### 3. THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL

**The soul as spirit.** First of all, we will try to establish from what has already been said what can be known about the essence of the soul. According to Plato, as is manifest from his teaching on its immortality, the soul is invisible, immaterial, spiritual, and supermundane; and this is true not only of the world-soul but also of the human soul. This is warranted by the explanation that the Demiurge himself created it. What he created is an immortal being. Only when it is transferred to the "instruments of time" does it join itself to a body, and only then do sense experiences begin. The immateriality and the immortality of the soul are the themes of the *Phaedo*: its supermundane home and its nature are the topics of the *Phaedrus*.

1) *The soul and sensation.* As an objection to the immateriality of the soul, it is alleged that Plato held out for a sensory soul. The created deities, as he writes, "[these created gods] imitating him [the Demiurge], received from him the immortal principle of the soul; and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body, and made it to be the vehicle of the soul, and constructed within the body a soul of another nature which was mortal, subject to terrible and irresistible affections—first of all, pleasure, the greatest incitement to evil; then pain, which deters from good; also rashness and fear, two foolish counsellors, anger hard to be appeased, and hope easily led astray—these they mingled with irrational sense and with all-daring love according to necessary laws, and so framed man" (*Timaeus*, 69 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 48).

2) *Unity of the soul.* This discussion of another, of a mortal sensory soul, should not convey the impression that in man there is actually

more than one soul. It only means, as Plato admits in the *Republic*, that the soul has various distinct parts: (a) reason or the rational soul (*λογιστικόν*), which coincides with reasoning and with non-sensory meditation; (b) the courageous soul (*θυμοειδές*), to which belong the noble (or higher) emotions, such as anger, ambition, courage, and hope; and (c) the instinctive, carnally appetitive soul (*ἐπιθυμητικόν*), in which are rooted the appetitive and sexual desires, as well as pleasure and aversion, and the need of rest. Although in the *Timaeus* these parts of the soul are actually localized in the head, chest, and abdomen, Plato presupposes only one human soul. Man is composed of body and soul. This unity of the human soul is clearly apparent in the *Phaedrus*, which compares the human soul with "a pair of winged horses and a charioteer" (*Phaedrus*, 226; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 250). The charioteer is the spirit-soul (reason); the paired horses are the other two parts, the more noble, the courageous, the less noble, the instinctive part of the soul. If the soul has matured and grown together, it would appear that its immateriality is endangered because sensible reality is drawn into the soul. On the other hand, it is patent that to Plato the soul is something immaterial. How is this still possible? Evidently because the soul in the truest sense of the word is for him only the spirit-soul. This becomes evident in the *Phaedo*. The immortal spiritual soul, of which the Dialogue treats, has become independent of all sensible reality. This is, of course, not possible in this world but it will be after death.

And thus we see that this discussion of the two lower portions of the soul attempts to take into account the fact that the spiritual soul exists in union with the body. The Neo-Platonists debated very fiercely whether or not the sensory soul persists in existence after the death of the body. Iamblichus affirmed it; Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus denied it. Plato holds with the latter, because his discussion of the sensory soul reflected his realization that the spiritual soul could not show itself as pure spirit but also had to assimilate the whole world of the senses. "Too bad" it had to assimilate it, as he naturally thought. For he would have preferred to deal with man as a purely rational being; but he was still unprejudiced enough to realize that in this world we must at least take into consideration corporeality and its sense perceptions and its yearnings.

Plato was neither a materialist nor a sensualist. Nor did he align himself with the spiritualists and the panlogists. He held to a reasonable "middle-of-the-road" position, thereby tending naturally enough

in the direction of the spirit-soul; for sensory reality was to him only something shadowy, puzzling, scarcely believable — in any case, not pure being. Unwilling to do away with it entirely, he assumed both the "courageous" and the "instinctive" parts of the soul.

3) *The aftereffects of this problem.* With this theory he created a distinct problem of psychology for the speculation of the whole of Western philosophy. We again and again distinguish between sense faculty and mind; and we attribute the sense faculty to animals, but in the case of man we assimilate that same faculty to the soul and identify the resultant whole soul with the mind. And then in the soul we make the distinction anew between the higher and the lower faculties, in cognition as well as in conation. This is an unstable attitude which might move one person to adopt monism and to see in the mind only a sublimized sense faculty, but might cause still others to perceive in the sense faculty only confused notions, and to still others offer the temptation to profess dualism, but as a compromise to bridge over the disparate views by the theory of substantial union, of reciprocal action or effect, of occasionalism or parallelism. All these aporias arise because on the one hand Plato with an astounding acuity opened a chasm between the sense faculty and the mind, and on the other hand recognized only one human soul — the rational, spiritual soul — which to him constituted the entire man.

**The soul as life.** 1) *The principle of motion.* In addition to its meaning as mind-substance, the soul denoted for Plato something entirely different, namely, the principle of motion and of life. Ancient philosophy distinguished between two kinds of motion: one which receives an impulse from without, mechanical motion, and the other in which the motion arises spontaneously as the result of an exercise of its own power from within, self-movement (immanent motion, automatic movement — Plato uses the term "self-movement"). This immanent motion, recognized wherever life manifests itself, is made synonymous with the soul: "You mean to ask whether we should call such a self-moving power life? I do. And when we see soul in anything — must we not admit that this is life? We must" (*Laws*, 895; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 637). "That which is moved from within has a soul, for such is the nature of the soul" (*Phaedrus*, 245; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 250). The soul is therefore a principle of life, not only mind and consciousness. Along with its psychological role it now plays also a cosmological role. It becomes a means of explaining life in the world. Ultimately, it explains all motion in general, for

all movement from without must ultimately be reduced to self-motion. Self-motion stands at the ultimate beginning. By such a concept the psychic becomes an ontological principle or *archē*: insofar as a being is motion and life, it is soul. Again we come face to face with the truth: "In the beginning . . .," but this time the Logos denotes the soul: "In the beginning was the soul."

2) *The effect of this teaching on later speculation.* This view radiates Platonic speculation down the centuries. In Plato himself these two concepts of soul stand unevenly one alongside the other. In Aristotle they will be reconciled. To him self-movement denoted the fundamental notion of his metaphysics: the Unmoved Mover whose essence is pure spirituality, "thought of thought" (*νόησις νοήσεως*). And within the world the soul as entelechy is to Aristotle also a principle of life in all degrees of the organic, even where there is no spirit or mind. This view is held also by the Scholastics.

In modern times, beginning with Descartes, the second meaning of the soul [as the principle of life] fades into the background. In the new era the soul is only consciousness. But with the advent of Vitalism, the other meaning [as the principle of life] again asserts itself; and in the vitalist philosophy of recent times, especially in the works of Ludwig Klages, the soul is again championed with renewed emphasis, but in this revival the first meaning of the soul as the mind is, sorry to say, positively excluded. In his philosophy, soul is exactly the antithesis of the mind, and the mind is its distinct adversary. For the ancients, however, this created no difficulty. Soul can be both mind and life.

**Soul as metaxy or principle of mediation.** Since the soul is life and movement, it becomes a medium between the idea and sensible reality. The human soul as mind is the seat of the knowledge of ideas. As a sensory soul it is also the place into which the contents of sensation flow in order, on the one hand, to awaken ideas, and on the other, to be read and interpreted by the ideas. The soul joins the two extremes together. The same is true also of the world-soul. It is also the seat of ideas, of the ideas according to which the world was fashioned. As such it antedates the world. Since this world-soul as the first movement is the cause of all other external motions, and as a consequence is naturally connected with the body, the world-soul again bridges the gap between the world of ideas and the material world. By means of it the ideas are the source of the material world and endow it with its present structure. Through the soul the sensi-

tive faculty of man and of the world can first of all share in the idea, and this insofar as the soul is both mind and movement. The doctrine of the parts of the soul seeks to symbolize nothing more than this transition from the spiritual to the sensory. It is the bridging over of dualism, of the chorismus. This may be clearly perceived in the *Timaeus*, where the appetitive soul is interpreted as the principle of life (77 a b).

It would be worthwhile to know how Plato joins together these two elements, namely mind and movement. What do these elements have in common? The similarities and dissimilarities of Plato and Leibniz on this question offer a fruitful field of investigation.

#### 4. THE FATE OF THE SOUL

**Incarnation.** An especially typical viewpoint in Plato's speculation is his teaching on the transmigration of souls. Once the soul has left the hands of the Demiurge, it is transferred to the "instruments of time": it undergoes its first incarnation here upon this earth. This first birth is the same for all, so that no soul can be discriminated against. At the conclusion of this first life, the soul appears along with its mortal body before the judgment seat of the dead to give an accounting of its conduct here upon earth. According to the judgment passed upon it, the soul will either enter the land of the blessed or be expelled to the subterranean prison chamber of the damned. This wandering lasts for a thousand years.

**Choice of life's course.** After it there follows the second birth. In this rebirth each soul chooses for itself its future lot. From the world beyond the grave, the souls pour into the meadow of forgetfulness to express their choice, and a herald proclaims in a solemn fashion: "Mortal souls, behold a new cycle of life and mortality. Your genius will not be allotted to you, but you will have to choose your genius; and let him who draws the first lot have the first choice, and the life which he chooses shall be his destiny. Virtue is free and, as a man honours or dishonours her, he will have more or less of her; the responsibility is with the chooser — God is justified" (*Rep.*, 617 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 875).

The choice of a state of life is especially dangerous for men. Some choose a lot which to them appears to be beautiful and glorious, for example, a tyranny, but the chooser will later lament that in such a choice it was his fate to be forced to watch his own children consumed by it. Then those who have thus chosen revile the God and

accuse Him of wrongdoing. But God is innocent; we are the ones who have chosen the Demon. Virtue is without a master; that is, everyone is able to acquire it. When we fail, it is because "ignorance and inordinate desire" have conquered us. And these have also a decisive voice in the election of a state of life, because the soul in its previous existence had so guided itself and thereby had so formed itself that in this choice of state it must act in conformity to what it had made of itself. The majority express their choice according to lifelong habits acquired in a previous existence (*Rep.*, 620 a). It becomes a matter of self-determination when a man at his second birth chooses to assume the nature of a woman; in his previous life he had permitted his sensitive faculty to lord over his reason and thus he had become effeminate. If Ajax should decide to become a lion, it would be because in his former existence he had lived and acted like that beast of prey. If Thersites should choose to become an ape, the buffoon would have already lived as one.

It is important that in our lifetime the charioteer of the soul—mind and reason—keep the reins firmly in his grasp and that by checking on them master the irrational and the emotional—feelings, sentiments, passions, and desires—and by so doing guide us correctly and justly through this life: "A man must take with him into the world below an adamantine faith in the truth and right, that there too he may be undazzled by the desire of wealth or the other allurements of evil, lest, coming upon tyrannies and similar villainies, he do irremediable wrongs to others and suffer yet worse himself" (*Rep.*, 619 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 876). Accordingly as the soul, during its first life on earth, had contemplated to a greater or less degree the eternal ideas and truths and had sought to make them its own, to that same extent will the soul in its later incarnation attain to a higher or a lower stage of existence.

**Table of values for the choice of life-forms.** Plato presents us with a hierarchy of values for life-forms, and this casts a brilliant light on his evaluation of man. The soul that has contemplated as many as possible of these eternal truths will receive the body of a philosopher or of a servant of beauty or of a muse or of an Eros. The soul of the next highest order will enter into the body of a king who has ruled according to law. The soul of the following degree will take up its abode in the body of a statesman, of a good father, or of a good businessman. That of the fourth stage will enter into the frame of a gymnast who loved physical exercise or of a zealous advocate of

medical care. The fifth descends to earth to lead the life of a seer or of a magician. The sixth will share in the life of a poet. The seventh, of a laborer or of a farmer. The eighth, that of a sophist or demagogue, the ninth, that of a tyrant. After the soul, following upon its first birth, has chosen its fate nine different times, it will return after 10,000 years to the star from which it originally came. The philosopher alone, after making but three such choices, will be permitted to seek out his celestial abode with the lapse of only 3000 years. And then the transmigration will begin all over again. "The soul of man is like the rain that falls from the heavens, only to return there to fall again upon the earth, in eternal cycles."

**The purpose of this doctrine of the transmigration of souls.** Nowhere has Plato offered us a strict proof for the transmigration of souls. He presents us, instead, with a myth that is quickened by a masterful display of his power of expression, as well as by ethos and pathos. Was the Pythagorean tradition to which these thought processes owe their origin sufficient proof for him? Or was the transmigration of souls perhaps not so important to him, but served rather to express the freedom of the will and the consciousness of responsibility? Freedom and responsibility are two important philosophical ideas which the myth contains. You are the smithy of your fate and of your character — these words could be written above the myth that furnishes us with such a glowing description of the transmigration of souls.

The concept of Plato recalls Kant's notion of an intelligible character. The various vocational types which are chosen and in which the individual must persevere everlastingly are nothing more than the essence and the character of a man. That the character of a person postulates a certain necessity in his actions Plato had recognized when he declared that a person must remain irrevocably in his chosen career. According to him a man truly chooses his own character. In the case of the intelligible character of Kant, we do not understand what kind or how much of an influence we may exert upon our character, and the freedom that supposedly was safeguarded thereby remains illusory. Plato, however, expressly declared that we make ourselves what we are, that the genius does not choose us but we him, because it is always in our power to act one way or the other. The first birth was the same for all, and it was also without the choice of a model. In the second birth each is able to acquire as much of both truth and virtue as he wishes. Later the choices become more

and more fixed until they solidify into ever more definite patterns, until in the end a person is forced into the career of his own choosing. Freedom is, of course, always present within the limits of his own choice. In Plato determinism was unable to find a foothold. He was a true advocate of the freedom of the will. Consequently he was also a stanch defender of the consciousness of guilt. He preached this doctrine with all the earnestness and the moral sublimity of an ordained prophet heralding a new religion. The eschatological myths in the *Gorgias* (524 ff.), the *Phaedo* (107 ff.), and the *Republic* (614 ff.) belong among the great monuments of human morality, and the reader cannot peruse them without being deeply affected and elevated.

## 5. CONDUCT OF LIFE

**True happiness.** If such a fate is at stake, it is very important that proper conduct be observed. And Plato was not only a theoretical moralist; he was able also to formulate truly practical norms of conduct. All men wish to be happy. But, as Plato develops the thought, they always seek happiness in the wrong places. Some look for it wherever the natural appetites, the lower portion of the soul, demand it be sought, consequently, in riches, in position, in pleasure, and in passion. But this does not constitute true happiness. Men of this kind are never satisfied, never content; they are parched by their carnal appetites, because they are slaves to their passions and thus become their own jailors. Others imagine that they can find happiness in ambition and in lust for power. In them the courageous part of the soul seizes the upper hand. They are somewhat better off than those first mentioned. But what they actually attain to here on earth is at most to the rank of an honorable soldier or of a good sportsman; often enough they end up by being careerists or successful business managers. True happiness can be found only where truth and values are esteemed highly and actually realized. Pride and a sense of honor are wicked counselors, but worse counselors are carnal appetites.

**Our first task.** Only clear thinking guarantees genuine happiness, because it alone leads the way to truth. This way leads us onward by means of the eternal ideas. Ignorance is, as a consequence, a true sickness of the soul. Knowledge and contemplation of the truth are its rightful state. When we reflect upon the ideas of God which are reproduced after a fashion in creation, and when we understand something of the divine order, our soul has the nourishment which

it requires. For through this reflection and understanding the soul itself is correctly regulated. What is still more important, the soul approaches ever more and more closely to the inner riches of God Himself, whose essence is manifested in His ideas and in His act of creation, and it becomes like to Him. "To fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like Him is to become holy, just and wise" (*Theaetetus*, 176 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 178) — this is the supreme goal of mankind. Protagoras had maintained: man is the measure of all things. Plato says: "God ought to be to us the measure of all things" (*Laws*, 716 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 488). The whole is an ethos of reality, truth, and righteousness. Pleasure and passion are excluded as are ambition and pride. These are indeed only blind leaders. Subjective caprice with its avariciousness ( $\pi\lambda\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\eta\pi\chi\epsilon\iota\sigma$ , "desire to be satiated") must remain silent. In its place stands the motto which should be inscribed above the *Republic*: "Do your part" ( $\tau\alpha\epsilon\alpha\pi\tau\sigma\tau\epsilon\eta\pi\chi\epsilon\iota\sigma$ ). What this is everyone must know. For learning and more learning are the nourishment of the soul.

**The harmonious man.** Is not this an expression of an oft-reviled intellectualism? Plato did speak this language. But in reality he was not an intellectualist. The man who made Eros the subject of two Dialogues, namely the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, and furthermore declared in the *Republic* that bravery and self-mastery are the basic virtues of any true community, was himself convinced that man cannot become holy through knowledge alone. Plato favored a harmoniously balanced formation of the entire human being — and in this there spoke the voice of mature human experience. A disproportion between the faculties of the body and of the soul is both ugly and harmful to the whole. A sturdy soul can, by poorly directed study and research, as well as by ambition and passion, cause a weak body to succumb to sickness. Contrariwise, a physical culture practiced to an extreme can ruin both soul and mind, because it leads to mental laziness, the most serious ailment that can overtake a man. As a consequence, whoever studies and learns should not forget physical exercise; on the other hand, whoever indulges in physical exercise should not curtail the time devoted to development of the mind, otherwise he will never acquire the reputation of being a truly cultured human being. Plato also recognized that for a full life man requires some happiness and joy, and also a certain amount of pleasure. In the Dialogues the *Laws* and the *Philebus*, he took these

matters into consideration and declared himself to be in favor of a "mixed life," that is to say, a life composed of both contemplation and pleasure. In his own mind, Plato was clear that no irrational element, be it blood or race, honor or pride, instinct or feeling, will to power or tyranny, the subconscious or orgiastic frenzy, could be a moral principle, that is to say, a norm for life and its conduct. Upon the chariot of the soul only reason may stand. Reason alone should hold the reins in its hands; it must control everything, even the sense of honor, pleasure, and satisfaction. By their hedonism, the Cyrenaics neglected moral value; the Cynics, by their insistence on virtue, disregarded the natural need for happiness which is in man. Plato was the first to teach us that man can be both good and happy at one and the same time (*ώς ἀγαθός τε καὶ εὐδαιμονία ἡμα τί γίγνεται ἀνηρ*), as Aristotle tells us in his panegyric on his master.

## 6. IMMORTALITY

Plato's thoughts on the immortality of the soul offer a fitting climax to his teaching on man. These ideas are developed especially in the *Phaedo*, to which we might add the *Phaedrus* 245 c, the *Republic* 608 a, and the *Laws* 895 ff. There are three arguments which Plato advanced in defense of his position. First, immortality follows from the existence of the a priori content of our knowledge. This content is not derived from our experiences of daily life. It nevertheless must have been acquired; consequently the soul must have had a previous existence. Strictly speaking, such an argument proves only the pre-existence of the soul, not its immortality. The postexistence (*a parte post*) is drawn from a further consideration, namely, that all becoming and all dissolution rest upon the transition from one antithetical state to its opposite: sleep follows an awakening; upon awakening, sleep; from the cold, warmth is engendered; from the warmth, cold; and so on. Thus we can envisage the pre-existence of the soul as a sleep to which an awakening naturally belongs; the awakening is again relieved by sleep, and so the process continues without end. By such an argument immortality is proved.

The soul, furthermore, must, be immortal because it is simple. A thing ceases to be only when it is dissolved into component parts, and things can be dissolved into parts only when they are bodies. That the soul is not material or corporeal we concluded from a consideration of its relation to the idea. Ideas are "uniform," always

remaining identical; they do not experience an "ebb and flow," as is the case with bodies. They are simple. And because the soul is the place where knowledge of ideas is contained, we must assume that it is also "uniform" and consequently simple.

Finally, immortality follows necessarily from the essence of the soul. Looked at notionally, the soul is life. Life, however, is self-movement. Self-movement must always be immortal. If this movement were to stop, all foreign or extraneous movement must likewise cease, because it originates ultimately in that which moves itself, the psychic. But this would mean that the heavens and the world-process would also have to stop. For this reason we must assume that the soul is something immortal.

## 7. AFTEREFFECTS

Plato's proofs for the immortality of the soul are open to objection. The last train of thought which he advanced is an argument which recalls the ontological proof for the existence of God. The first and the second proofs represent only analogical conclusions; they therefore are not conclusive. These considerations of Plato have, however, become immortal. Later philosophers have turned to them again and again, have polished them and attempted to revalidate them. In one form or another they reappear in different works down to the present day. Especially strong has been the aftereffect of his view that man is essentially soul, and that his true fatherland is not in this world but in the afterlife. This latter view of Plato's is in conformity with the teachings of Christianity. If, for this reason, St. Thomas Aquinas explains the beatific vision (*visio beatifica*) in Aristotelian terms as a contemplative life (*vita contemplativa*), his words are only the words of Aristotle which he sees fit to use; but they do not represent Aristotle's spirit. For Aristotle sought beatitude in this life. On the contrary, we find in the eschatological myths of Plato and especially in the *Phaedo* the belief—we know already that it was drawn from the Pythagoreans—that we will contemplate truth fully only after death, and the soul will be entirely happy only after it has lived righteously and has prepared itself to face judgment calmly. The dictum of St. Augustine concerning the relation between Plato and Christianity is therefore absolutely true in regard to the concept of man: "Let all these [other philosophers] give place to those good god-conceiving men [Platonists]" (*De civitate Dei*, VIII, 5; J. Healey's

translation, *The City of God*, 2 vols. [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1945], Vol. I, pp. 229-230).

## THE REPUBLIC

Plato wrote of man not only as an individual but also as a member of society, and his speculation concerning the state is treasured as the most valuable and most renowned contribution of his whole philosophy, which is truly rich in original thoughts. In this we can appreciate anew how philosophy in its classical period sought to be a practical guide for mankind.

### 1. ORIGIN OF THE STATE

A state arises naturally, both in its first beginnings and in the essential outlines of its later developments. It is not free will or choice which brings men to band together; they follow an instinct and a law of nature. Plato, therefore, could not have been an advocate of a contract theory of a state in which the state is conceived as tracing its origin to a simple choice of its citizenry and in which all development is permitted to take place according to this same free choice. He carried on an effective polemic against the opinion of the Sophists (*Laws*, 889 d ff.) that in connection with a form of government a man can do exactly as he pleases—as if in this matter there were no objective norms that were greater than man himself. By this theory Plato became the father of the natural law up to the time of Hugo Grotius. No matter how this theory is bolstered later on—Aristotle himself gave it another basis and another interpretation—in any case Plato was the first who challenged the arbitrary power of the tyrant and of the commune with a court of higher instance to which mankind could appeal again and again, whenever it fell victim to its own want of moderation.

### 2. CLASSES

**Workmen.** Thus there originates directly "from nature" a social order in the republic. Because the individual is not self-supporting or self-sustaining insofar as the necessities of life are concerned, he is not an "autarch"; he proceeds to divide work in a way that will be beneficial to the whole. Some take upon themselves the task of providing food; others, manual labor; others, business and commerce; and thus there arises the working class, the producers.

**Warriors.** Since the citizens of the republic, as they are men, run

the danger of becoming involved in hostilities or wars from without and from within, they stand in need of guardians or soldiers. Of necessity, then, there arises a professional military class. The best of these will naturally assume control of the state; they will be responsible for both internal and external policy and thus they will form the ruling class, the "philosopher-kings." Plato devoted a great deal of attention to the class which defends the state, the soldiers. On them everything depends. They must be educated most carefully; this means, of course, that they must become corporally fit and mentally able.

1) *Education of the young.* At this point Plato propounded his pedagogical ideas. Even fables with which men regale their children should be carefully chosen. They may not, for example, contain anything about the gods which would bring them into disrepute. Enmities between the deities, plots and counterplots in heaven, about which Homer poetized so gracefully, should not be told to children. How can men be properly educated if they entertain only a low regard for the highest beings there are? Children should not be made to listen to anything that smacks of cowardice, dissoluteness, or dishonesty. When we recount for their benefit the insulting and abusive conversations between Achilles and Agamemnon, the passionate love of Zeus for Hera, the adultery which Ares and Aphrodite committed, or in general the moral infirmities, such as haughty pride, banality, cruelty, or rebellion against the gods, and finally when telling such stories we make out that such wretches are really heroes, or when retailing them it would appear as if injustice brought rewards and justice only penalties, by so doing we would be contributing to the delinquency of juveniles who as it is are all too prone to be led astray. If we should constantly seek to fill the minds of these young folk with such examples of evil, we would harm these future leaders far more than we would injure young bulls if we turned them out to locoweeded pastures. By grazing on patches of such harmful fodder, the cattle would suffer, for the small portions of the noxious weeds which they munched would coalesce to form a whole and this would finally become poisonous, if not death-dealing.

2) *The cultivation of the arts.* For this reason, plays, music, and painting must be carefully supervised. Only the deeds of the valorous, prudent, pious, and free men should be portrayed. In no sense should young folk be permitted to waste their time on the enticements of the senses, immoderate excitement, passionate displays, in fact any-

thing that is laughable, effeminate, or childish, to say nothing of the dramas which depict bestial lives. The supreme norm of art is not the subjective pleasure, the fanatical transport; it is not the pleasurable sensation which results from enticement and its satisfaction; but it is the objectively beautiful, the ontologically correct, and the ethically valuable. If we should permit pleasure and enjoyment to have the final voice in determining what is beautiful and what is not, we would find that a wicked kind of "Theatocracy" had seized control and that this, in the truest sense of the term, denotes a lawless libertinism. "But in music there first arose the universal conceit of omniscience and general lawlessness" (*Laws*, 701 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 475).

3) *Physical training.* Greatest emphasis should be placed on physical training. The guardians must become strong and sturdy in order to be able to wage war. For this reason the youth of the state must be inured to continence in sex matters and be reared to moderation in eating and drinking. They should be taught to take part in sports not for the purpose of establishing records, but to learn from them how to bring the body under control. A hardy race is one that does not pay much attention to medical care. Wounds and sickness, which the battle of life causes, should be treated with appropriate remedies. But to treat a body that has grown slack through laziness and immoderation should never be shown in the "modern manner," that is to say, by means of plasters and salves, of bandages and baths, of compresses and cupping glasses, of diets and strict regime: this everlasting round of doctors and a hypochondriacal anxiety about the state of one's health is no life at all; it is dying by inches and is unworthy of a man.

4) *Eugenics.* To promote a healthy race, Plato offered some eugenic regulatives: "The best of either sex should be united with the best as often, and the inferior with the inferior, as seldom as possible; and that they should rear the offspring of one sort of union, but not of the other, if the flock is to be maintained in first-rate condition" (*Rep.*, 459 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 721). Malformed children should be exposed. The mentally incurable and congenital criminals, that is, moral degenerates, should be put to death. The norms which are set up for communities of men and for property in common serve the same purpose, namely, to produce a eugenic race.

5) *Women and property.* The guardians should remain unmarried and should own no property, so that their personal interests might

not in any way influence their behavior, that the unity of the state might be strengthened, that they personally might remain true to their supreme task, namely, to serve the best interests of the citizens. Women are to be considered in principle equal to men. Young girls should be given the same training as young men and accorded the same discipline. Women should also take part in war, although when it is being waged they should be assigned lighter duties as befit their nature. Later, in the *Laws*, Plato retained these objectives which, as ideals, he had advanced in the *Republic*, but he admitted that they could not, practically speaking, be carried out, and let it be known that he again favored both the family and private property. In regard to this latter he showed himself to be very niggardly; he circumscribed the limits of property very narrowly, and he permitted excess wealth to be taxed out of existence, because to him property engendered avarice, the source of all evil in the state. To form a just estimate of this Platonic "Utopia," we must not overlook the fact that his recommendations were not intended for all the citizens of the state, only for the guardians. The laboring class could live in families and could own private property. Consequently, instead of considering the community of women and possession of goods in common as an essential part of the Platonic republic, we should rather speak of a marriageless and a propertyless vocation of the guardians, for whom such restrictions were alone intended.

**The Philosopher-Kings.** From among the warriors the most talented were to be selected, and between the ages of twenty and thirty they were to be given a very special scientific training together with a fitting physical education. Whoever distinguished himself in these subjects was to be singled out and placed in the third class, the class of "perfect guardians." And by this we become acquainted with the true spirit, the underlying genius, of the Platonic republic. These so-called perfect guardians should be trained to become perfect philosophers so that the Platonic republic might have bases both of truth and of idealism. They should be made to study, first of all, for another five years, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, the liberal arts, and particularly philosophical dialectics in order to acquire an understanding of all laws, truths, and values in the world. Then for another fifteen years they should be made to serve in a high official capacity so that they might learn something of the world and of life in reality. When they reach their fiftieth year, this select circle or group should resign its position and live only for the contemplation

of that which is beautiful in itself and to furnish ideas according to which the state might be administered.

1) *The mastery of the best.* "For there will never be an end of wickedness among the peoples of the world, if the philosophers do not become kings, and the kings philosophers." What is justice? is the theme of the *Republic*. The answer is given: justice is righteousness, that means everything in the state, among the citizens, in the laws, and within institutions should be true, should correspond to the ideal order. Not what man would like to do, but what a man should do, is the order that is demanded for the state. In this regard the formula means: Do your part (*τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν*). Truth, wisdom, and the purest moral conation are the foundations upon which the ideal polity or commonwealth is constructed. Consequently, only "the best" should rule. The state which absorbed the attention of Plato was an aristocracy.

2) *Mastery of the one best.* If only that one who was actually considered "the best" headed the state—and with this Plato reckons—we would have a monarchy. The man at the head of such a state would be all-powerful, not because he was actually the strongest, but because by his wisdom and by his moral conduct he had become a counselor of justice. Personally he would not speak, but justice would find a voice in him. He would not be a dictator, a man of *hoc volo* (I will this), *sic iubeo* (thus do I command), *sit pro ratione voluntas* (let my will take the place of reason); he would be the interpreter of whatever was good absolutely, and his will would be regulated solely by prudence and reason. Consequently, no limits would need to be placed on his jurisdiction. If, consequently, either he or the "nocturnal counsel" (where conditions demand it) should control the entire political life of a people, namely, economy, justice, science, art, religion, and even marriage and the family, and if in the assertion of his own theories the ruler should go so far as sentence to death anyone who violently disagreed with his teaching on the state, Plato would consider such an exercise of power as little an encroachment on individual freedom, as another would not consider it an encroachment on academic freedom if a teacher should refuse to countenance his pupil making a mistake in arithmetic. Such an all-powerful monarch, Plato holds in the *Republic*, would surpass any other ruler who ruled entirely according to law. A monarch is much more flexible and much more adaptable. Laws are always a fixed quantity; life is, on the contrary, ever different and constantly changing. Once

a monarch were in the possession of correct political principles, he could reach the proper decisions, no matter what kind of a situation might confront him. We will hear later on what kind of a refutation Aristotle offered to this theory.

### 3. FORMS OF STATES

**Timocracy.** Besides the republic, Plato mentioned other forms of the state: timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. A timocracy would be ruled not by the spiritually and morally elite but by those who are fired by ambition: men who regard themselves as gifted and talented because they are athletes or huntsmen or soldiers. These are inclined to act on the spur of the moment rather than with coolness and calculation; they are prone to wage war rather than to court peace; they are cunning and resourceful experts, but without a liberal education of mind and heart. They are also avaricious; consequently they own property and enrich themselves in secret. They serve their own personal interests rather than those of the community. In the power of the state, they are concerned not so much with the state as they are with its power; and this power is theirs.

**Oligarchy.** Etymologically, an oligarchy denotes the rule of the few; actually, however, it is the rule of the rich to the exclusion of the poor. If in a timocracy secret avarice was the ulcerous evil, in the oligarchy the profit motive becomes the norm of government. In a timocracy at least the honorable and the courageous portions of the soul were in ascendancy; in an oligarchy everything is dominated by the lower portion of the soul—sheer covetousness. The state is no longer administered in accordance with reality and with righteousness, but its administration is to be found in the hands of a few usurers. As a consequence, professional people do not occupy any important posts, only politicians who pose as all-knowing, although *de facto* they are ignorant. Under such a form of government we have a primacy of politics, which is in effect only office-seeking and which hinders all worthwhile endeavor, destroys internal unity, and condemns the state to impotency, because the people no longer find representation in the state, only the exploiting class.

**Democracy.** A further deviation from the ideal is envisaged by Plato in a democracy. In such a state complete freedom of action prevails. "At least they say so," as Plato remarked sarcastically. There is full freedom, especially of speech. As a consequence, in such a state we have no binding authority, no inviolable rights; all are

equal and everyone is able to express himself as he pleases, as in an "old clothes' shop." These and other kindred characteristics are proper to democracy, which is "a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike" (*Rep.*, 558 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 816). Plato believes the real corruption of a democracy is to be found in the democrat himself: "His life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom" (*Rep.*, 561 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 820). "The souls of the many have no eye which can endure the vision of the divine" (*Sophist*, 254 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 262). In this we can discern the born aristocrat. In addition, Plato had undergone many harrowing experiences at the hands of the democracy as it existed in Greece in his day. And sophistry had turned both truth and rights topsy-turvy. License was called freedom, rashness bravery, shamelessness manliness, debauchery grandiosity. And so we can ask ourselves: Must such conditions always exist? And is it really true that some possess the truth with absolute certitude, whereas others are excluded from it with the same certitude?

**Tyranny.** The most degenerate form of the state is found in a tyranny. This is not the antithesis of democracy but results from it. Democracy flourishes by an excess of freedom. Wives no longer obey their husbands; in fact, even animals are more insolent and less restrained in a democracy than under any other form of government, for "as the mistress, so also the poodle." Even horses and other draught animals are more aware of the freedom; their pace is more stately and they cannot be brought to give ground to the pedestrians—all because the principle of equality prevails. But such excesses lead gradually to the downfall of freedom itself. "The truth being that the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction; and this is the case not only in the seasons and in the vegetable and animal life, but above all else in the forms of government" (*Rep.*, 564 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 822). In these internal strifes the people need and demand a leader. And because they are accustomed to "have always some champion whom they set over themselves and nurse into greatness" (*Rep.*, 565 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 824), it may even happen that such a leader is elevated still higher by the "wily magicians and tyrant makers" of the party, until he gets a taste of power, just as a lion becomes a man-eater just as soon as he samples human flesh. Such a pampered individual becomes intoxicated by the power that he has tasted and begins to suffer from

megalomania. "And you know that man who is deranged and not right in his mind, will fancy that he is able to rule, not only over men, but also over the gods" (*Rep.*, 573 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 831). At first the tyrant will show himself friendly and he will make grandiose promises, e.g., he will cancel debts and he will begin to redistribute both property and land. Later he will busy himself with the task of liquidating his opponents. He will start a "phony" war solely for the purpose of creating a need for his leadership and the people will become so preoccupied that they will have no time to rebel against his regime. He will spy on the brave and the magnanimous and the rich to find grounds to "purge" the state of them. He will move only within the circle of his own "creatures"; he will continuously add to his bodyguard and keep more and more aloof from his subjects. In the end, he will confiscate all weapons so that the people will be completely at his and at his henchmen's mercy; "then the parent [the people] will discover what a monster he has been fostering in his own bosom" (*Rep.*, 569 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 828). Then and then only will they begin to see what tyranny actually is: slavery among slaves. Not only are the people slaves, but also the tyrants themselves. The people are the slaves of the tyrant, and he himself is also a slave, a slave to his own lusts and passions (*Rep.*, 573 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 831). For the philosopher of a mankind which is founded upon reason and truth, freedom and moral volition, such a degenerate state must naturally be an abomination of abominations.

#### 4. TOTALITARIAN OR CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

**Power of the strong.** Is not the republic of Plato a totalitarian state? The all-embracing regulations for the education of soldiers and warriors, the rigid conduct of the entire life of the family, public life, economy, science, arts, religion, and the omnipotence of the philosopher-kings appear to point in this direction. It is true that Plato wished to make his republic as strong as possible, both from within and from without. He made a distinction, however, between power and power. There is a sheer physical power which is a natural desire, *cupiditas naturalis*, as Hobbes remarked so appropriately. This recognizes only the individual or the collective egoism, the might and the power of the strong. This, in reality, is lawlessness. Laws which are enacted under such a regime are simply matters of party politics and party policy, and not matters of the state: "According to our view,

such governments are not polities at all, nor are laws right which are passed for the good of the particular classes and not for the good of the whole State. States which have such laws are not polities but parties, and their notions of justice are simply unmeaning" (*Laws*, 715 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, pp. 486-487). Plato refused to accept such a totalitarian state; it is the modern state of Machiavelli. No one should submit to such a government; a person should, if necessary, suffer himself to be banished or he should emigrate of his own free will. "If at last necessity plainly compels him to become an exile from his native land, rather than bow his neck to the yoke of slavery and be ruled by inferiors, and he has to fly, an exile he must be and endure all such trials rather than accept another form of government which is likely to make men worse" (*Laws*, 770 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 531).

**The power of law.** There is also a power of law and of truth. This power Plato wished to be established in his republic. His state is a constitutional government, and a power which incorporates justice in its laws and policies appears to him to be without blame. From the fact that the "polis" of Plato is spatially limited—it must not contain more than 5040 families—we can readily understand that he did not intend it to become a world power or to gain control over the whole world. Decisive for a correct evaluation of his viewpoint is the fact that the Platonic state neither internally nor externally manifests any desire for material aggrandizement, but always and everywhere strove "to do its part" and thereby to achieve what had been prescribed by an objective, ideal order that would be valid for all men and would afford an effective curb to any "strong-arm" policy. For this reason Plato was not troubled by the problems of "the individual and the community," "authority and freedom" in internal affairs, by the policy of economics, or by the problems of nationalism and imperialism in foreign affairs. The eternal ideal order stands both for necessity and for freedom.

**Basis for the state.** If ever the motto, *iustitia fundamentum regnorum*, had been true of any state, it was certainly true of the republic. Consequently, Plato came to the conclusion that the cause that brought about the downfall of any state or kingdom was not to be sought in the "cowardice" or in the "ignorance of military strategy" either in the rulers or the subjects, but was "due to their general degeneracy, and especially to their ignorance of the most important human affairs" (*Laws*, 688 c; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 463). "And this

tradition which is true, declares that cities of which some mortal man not God is the ruler, have no escape from evils and toils. . . . We must hearken, both in private and in public life, and regulate our cities and houses according to law, meaning by the very term 'law' the distribution of the mind" (*Laws*, 713 e; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 485).

**Utopia.** Have we understood correctly what Plato meant by the ideal order? And would men hold fast to it once they had become acquainted with it? This would be a supposition for the practical evaluation of the Platonic precepts. Because we entertain doubts about its feasibility, we call the blueprint of the Platonic state a Utopia. It may be a Utopia, but it deserves this name only insofar as every ideal is a Utopia: in its full purity it is neither understood nor has it been realized; nevertheless it illuminates a world of error, both as a norm and as an everlasting objective after which all things strive and upon which all men of good will are nourished.

## THE WORLD

### 1. THE VISIBLE WORLD

The work that is essential for an understanding of Plato's cosmology is the *Timaeus*. This Dialogue has influenced the "world picture" (*Weltbild*) of the West perhaps more than any other book. It was read in the Middle Ages in the Latin translation of Cicero and Chalcidius together with the latter's commentary on it; it was tapped especially by the mediaeval cosmographies and encyclopedias, as, for example, those of William of Conches or Honorius of Autun. Even Galileo was inspired by it when he set down the mathematical draft for his cosmological system. And especially the teleological study of nature moves in the orbit traced out by it down to our day, and merges into physicotheology as it does there. As in his psychology, so also in his cosmology, Plato made copious use of the myth. And he did this first of all because within the sphere of the space-time world, there is no such thing as a strict science, as he himself said; and second, because image and symbol permit us to conjecture about something that a mere notion is unable to encompass.

Plato sharply and clearly differentiated between the physical world and the world of ideas. He designated the physical as the visible world (*τόπος ὄπατός*) in contradistinction both to the world of ideas and the world of becoming. The world of ideas is purely intelligible.

The world of becoming stands midway between being and non-being; no true and distinct reality may be ascribed to it; and it is ever changing and consequently something manifold, divisible, indeterminate, unlimited, boundless, great, and small. But what must be kept in mind is the fact that the physical world is posited in time and space; it is only the appearance of an idea in the sense of being a copy of an idea. For this reason Plato declared it partakes ( $\muέθεξις$ ) of an idea and only for this reason can it be prolonged into something like an apparent existence. It is like unmolded wax which is imprinted with an image by an idea, or like a nurse who adopts and cares for a child whose real father is the idea. Just as sense perception is possible and can be interpreted only by means of the idea, so the physical world exists only through the idea.

## 2. FORMATION OF THE WORLD

**The myth.** The world exists only because of the goodness of God. "He was good and the good can never be jealous of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things be as like himself as they could be. This is, in the truest sense, the origin of creation and of the world as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of the wise men" (*Timaeus*, 29 e; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 14). The Demiurge is not, however, the creator who called out of nothing everything that exists. He found something pre-existent, namely, matter; and his work consisted solely in this, "that finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in irregular and disorderly fashion, out of the disorder brought order, considering that this was in every way better than the other" (*ibid.*). The first thing that the Demiurge formed was the cosmic soul. This is a spiritual, invisible, rational, and living substance. It is a "mixture" of indivisible and eternally unchanging reality on the one hand; and on the other, of divisible and ever changing reality. Just like the human soul, it is clothed with a body, the matter of the cosmos. This soul vivifies the cosmos and by its providence and its animate power forms the universe: created gods, men, animals, plants, and inorganic matter. The universe is stratified: above the kingdom of inorganic matter is the plant kingdom; above this, the animals, men, and ultimately the "created gods," that is, the planets (along with our earth) and the stars. The higher we ascend, so much more intelligence we meet; the lower we descend, the less intelligence appears in phenomena. And as a consequence the entire universe "became a living creature truly

endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God" (*Timaeus*, 30 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 14). And since this universe "has received animals, mortal and immortal, and is filled with them, and has become a visible animal containing the invisible—the sensible God who is the image of the intellectual (or reading *ποιητοῦ*, "of his maker"), the greatest, best, fairest, most perfect—the one, only-begotten heaven" (*Timaeus*, 92 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 68), as the solemn conclusion of the *Timaeus* runs.

**Meaning of the myth.** Aristotle understood this description of the origin of the world literally and contended that Plato taught the formation of the world in time and that it is eternal only insofar as it will have no end (*De caelo*, I, 10; 280 a 28). But already Xenocrates, the second head of the Academy after the death of Plato, was of the opinion that Plato in his presentation had pursued only didactic aims much after the fashion of a mathematician who draws a geometric figure in successive lines for a better understanding, whereas it is something timeless. Practically all Platonists have interpreted the *Timaeus* in this sense.

1) *Necessity of a basis for the world.* What Plato intended to express by his teaching concerning the formation of the world was the thought that the world did not come into existence of itself, but was dependent upon a cosmic exemplar which, to be sure, exists of itself. And even if the world—that is the world-soul as well as the matter—is eternal, it too depends upon a final exemplar (cause)—something that we can discern even in Aristotle himself. *Timaeus* means nothing more than a concrete and pictorial parallel for a dialectical ascent to the "Anhypotheton"—the Unconditioned First Principle—and to the idea of the good-in-itself advanced in the *Republic*.

2) *The living spirit.* The second great pivotal concept Plato wished to express through the myth was a continuation and deepening of the notion of teleology. That the world is orderly follows logically from the theory of ideas. The Demiurge produces the world through reference to the eternal ideas. According to Plato every idea is, as we have already seen, both a purpose and a goal, and the entire realm of ideas is nothing more than a striving upward to the Supreme Being and consequently "a proceeding from out" and "a positing thereby" (cf. p. 93). The fact that this world is pervaded by the spirit not only denotes a logical order, such as is present in a logarithmic table, but also signifies a living spirit—of this the *Timaeus*

assures us when it advances the theory of the cosmic soul which regulates the universe by its providence (*πρόνοια*) and makes it a cosmos (*Timaeus*, 30 b 5-c 1). Even mechanism recognizes purpose and order. The book of Leucippus is entitled "On the Mind" (*Περὶ νοῦ*) and it is supposed to have taught that every happening is a meaningful conformity to law (*πάντα ἐκ λόγου καὶ ἵπ̄ ἀνάγκης*, "all things [happen] with reason and of necessity"). Are such articulations of purpose possible without a mind which devises them? Is there such a thing as order without itself having been first ordered? Mechanism must assume this. But Plato, the father of the doctrine of ideas and thereby also of the eternal "propositions before God," as far as the being of the world was concerned, was of the opinion that its order presupposes a being which regulates, and this being is not only an objective goal or purpose but also subjectively a living spirit. Whether or not the cosmic soul is the same thing as God is debated. Be that as it may, in both instances there remains the further point that the "nous" which pervades the universe presupposes a living principle from which it emanates: "intelligence (*νοῦς*) could not be present in anything which was devoid of a soul" (*Timaeus*, 30 b 3; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 14).

3) "*In the beginning was the soul.*" We have already touched upon the theory that the living soul as a source of the intellect may also be the source of power, of causality (cf. p. 103). Not only is the cosmic soul the ultimate cause of motion, but in general all true causality possesses something of the soul. Contemporary philosophy recognizes in causality nothing more than the regular, transient succession of two happenings or explains it by the concept of emanation or by the notion of identity. Plato interpreted all causality according to psychic experience, which is familiar to us in our self-experience. Neither in his psychology nor in his cosmology does he trace the origin of the soul from the body, but vice versa, the psychic comes first and affords us an explanation for all bodily movement, in fact, for all corporeal being. The *Laws* place great emphasis on this, vigorously attacking the position of the pre-Socratics, who had always had recourse to a material *Archē* (First Principle): "Nearly all seem to be ignorant of the nature and the power of the soul, especially in what relates to her origin: they do not know that she is among the first of things, and before all bodies, and is the chief author of their changes and transpositions" (*Laws*, 892 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 634). "Characters and manners, wishes and reasonings, and true

opinions and reflections, and recollections are prior to the length and the breadth and depth and strength of bodies, if the soul is prior to the body" (*Laws*, 896 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 638).

### 3. MATTER

**Eternal matter.** The consequence of this theory would be panpsychism, as advocated by Leibniz later on in his teaching on the monads. But Plato, no matter how individualistic and unique we may consider his philosophy to be, would not willingly adopt such a radical view. Just as he has place for a material world in addition to his world of ideas, and for opinion besides knowledge, and a less perfect state besides Utopia, so in the *Timaeus* he acknowledges in addition to a mind and a soul something else as well. The Demiurge is not an omnipotent creator of the world. He found matter pre-existent, eternal. With this he was forced to work, and it placed limitations on his will. The Demiurge sought to make all things well, and nothing bad, "God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable" (*Timaeus*, 30 a 3; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 14). That he was not able to carry out his will in all respects was due to the matter at his disposal. Consequently, beside the works of his independent creative activity we can find works of "necessity." To this group of works belongs everything that is dependent upon matter as such. Plato did not wish to ascribe to it causality in the true sense of the word. It is only a "co-causality" (*συναιτιον*) and is as such a blind (*πλανωμένη αἰτία* — lit. "wandering" cause), mechanically operative causality, as we would describe it. The true causality behind all becoming is always only the soul. But matter is also always present, and this has inevitable consequences. The Demiurge cannot fashion the best possible world. Here we should also recall the thought expressed in the *Theaetetus*, that evil "hovers around the mortal nature, and this earthly sphere" (*Theaetetus*, 176 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 178). Forced by necessity, Plato grudgingly admitted that in his system he could only fit matter poorly. For this reason he made an attempt to trace its origin *more geometrico*, and hence ideally.

**Idealization of matter.** Plato derived the four elements of Empedocles — water, fire, air, and earth — from the regular polyhedron. The earth as the heaviest element is made of hexagons; fire, the lightest and sharpest, of tetragons because such bodies have the fewest plane surfaces and the sharpest points. By similar reason air is made

of octahedrons and water of icosahedrons. The elementary polyhedrons in turn consist of original triangles of such a kind that the formation of the specific elements is commensurate with them. These original triangles are made from faces, these in turn from lines, and these ultimately from points. The points are however measurable and stem from the One. This theory of original triangles appeared to answer in a special way the atomic theory that had been propounded by Democritus. Plato occupied himself, therefore, with the *Archē* (First Principle) problem of the pre-Socratics.

#### 4. SPACE AND TIME

**Res extensa.** The result is a new *Archē* or First Principle: space. For it is this to which the derivation of matter from the pristine triangle inevitably led; and this space is mathematical space, which in Plato is considered as matter. As later in the works of Descartes, so here the corporeal appears simply as extension, as if there were no distinction between physical and mathematical bodies. Rationalism seeks over and over again to resolve the world into mere concepts. Plato, however, was fully aware that his derivation was open to question. To him it was only a "spurious notion" by which we master for ourselves spatial material; and to him space and matter were something "obscure," "puzzling," and "scarcely credible." According to him we must not always insist that there is space. "We, beholding as in a dream, say of all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space" (*Timaeus*, 52 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 32). Time also is not absolutely necessary. Time exists only where there is corporeal change. Time came into existence only with the world of bodies, the material world. Plato points out that being exists of which it would be meaningless to ask: Where? and When? And this is the being which Plato considered in the first place. But he conceded that everything does not end with the world of ideas; that we also have space and matter, even if this contingent world of becoming is not true reality.

**The aporia or philosophical difficulty.** Should we *de facto* refuse to ascribe causality to matter? If various things are derived by necessity from the essence of matter, should we not necessarily designate as an effect that which is necessarily derived? And if it is an effect, is it not also reality? Here he repeats in cosmology the theoretical problem of knowledge concerning the relation that exists between pure reasoning and sense perceptions. In his theory of knowledge

Plato sought to stress thought and reasoning. And at that time we deemed it necessary to ask ourselves: If we don't arrive at memory recall without sensible reality, and also not in the precise form of self-memory of this or that, can we honestly say that sensible reality, insofar as its content is concerned, contributes nothing whatsoever to knowledge? And we are forced to put the further question: Is the material world actually only a medium between being and non-being? Plato here again forcibly injected dualism into the problem in an attempt to dispense with it, by minimizing one of its features in its claim to reality. That Plato himself was fully aware of the difficulties is manifest in the expressions he uses: he designates matter and space as "obscure," "puzzling," and "scarcely credible."

## G O D

### 1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

When we read the touching words with which the mature Plato in the *Laws* (887 c ff.) addressed the youth of his time who doubted about the most sublime reality there is, that is, about God, we get the impression that religion was for him, great philosopher that he was, a matter of the heart. In reality, to Plato God was not simply an object of faith. Such a thought was foreign to ancient scholars. That God exists is rather the object of knowledge. Plato himself never developed any formal proofs for the existence of God, but in his works we find two trains of thought which point the way to Him, and which in the philosophy after Plato were developed into formal proofs of His existence. We can designate the one as the physical approach to God and the other as the dialectical.

**The physical way to God.** The physical approach to God is that reflection which served Plato also as a proof for the immortality of the soul. In a concise form it is developed in the *Phaedo* (245 c ff.) and in a more elaborate version in the *Laws* (891 b ff.). The starting point of this approach is the fact of motion. Motion is indisputable. Every movement is either self (immanent) motion—if it has its origin from within—or extraneous (transient) motion—if it originates from without. All motion that has been initiated from without must ultimately go back to self-motion. This self-motion is both logically and ontologically prior to movement from without. For this reason the fact of motion in the world leads us to assume one or more sources of self-motion. Now, traditionally, we call that which

moves itself the soul. For this reason the soul is prior to the body; and so it was an unpardonable error on the part of the pre-Socratics not to have recognized this. By their materialistic attitude these philosophers advanced the cause of atheism. Souls are, as experience again demonstrates, either good or bad. Only an ordered movement can proceed from a good soul; from a wicked one we can expect only disordered movement. The great and far-reaching cycles of movement in nature, especially those of the heavenly bodies, are strictly regular and well-ordered. Disorderly movements in nature are exceptions rather than the rule and are limited in their significance. As a consequence, we must assume that the dominant souls from which the cosmic movements derive are beneficent and orderly and thus the supreme soul, namely, that one which is responsible for the most universal and reliable movements, is also the most perfect and the best possible. Since we know that there is disorder in the world, we must take for granted that there are many souls, or at least more than one, in order to be able to explain these disturbances and disorders. But it is essential that we know of the existence of a perfect soul. In comparison to it all the exceptions are of no importance.

This train of thought in Plato does not result inevitably in a pure monotheism; nor does it posit a creator of the world but only a world-constructer, also possibly only an immanent God, namely the world-soul. But we are not compelled to interpret Plato too strictly, for the world-soul is prior to the cosmos and the spiritual is prior to length and breadth and depth—all of which would lead us to conclude that God is transcendent. Be that as it may, Plato had furnished the groundwork for the Aristotelian proofs of the existence of God based on motion. We can rightly appreciate and justly evaluate the proofs for the existence of an Unmoved Mover in the seventh and eighth books of Aristotle's *Physics*, only when we have before us what Plato wrote on this subject in the work of his later years.

**The dialectical way to God.** The dialectical proof or approach to God is the ascent from hypothesis to hypothesis until we reach the *Anhypotheton*, or the Unconditioned First Principle, the ultimate basis of being which itself lies beyond being, surpassing everything both in power and in value. We have already seen something of this ascent (see p. 91 f.). In the history of philosophical systems it affords the steppingstone to another historically later proof for the existence of God, namely, the proof from causality and contingency.

A parallel to the dialectical ascent to God, which is perfected in reasoning, is the approach through the beautiful upon which we journey in Eros. The *Symposium* had sketched it in that section in which Diotima teaches Socrates that art of loving which blossoms into pristine love, a love which leaves no appetite unsated but is itself absolutely and entirely self-sufficient (*ἰκανόν*), an absolute in which the soul can take its repose. It is a principle upon which St. Augustine later draws when he coined his now famous phrase, "Our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." The dialectical approach gives us a transcendent God in a monotheistic sense. Plato had indeed often adapted the colloquial usages of popular religion to his own purposes and had frequently mentioned a variety of gods, but without doubt he was personally a monotheist. In those passages where his earnestness finds outlet and he reproduces his innermost thoughts, he regularly speaks of God rather than of the gods.

## 2. THE ESSENCE OF GOD

If someone had questioned him about the essence of God, Plato would no doubt have replied, as he did when interrogated about the essence of goodness: "The subject is so sublime that I would rather not give a direct answer to your question." We can, however, arrive at an approximation of his views by an examination of the train of thought that is pertinent to this subject. If we should keep before our eyes the dialectical approach to God, it would be clear to us that, as far as Plato was concerned, the essence of God is to be sought in aseity as well as in His absolute value. God is Being itself: and He is also the Good. If one thinks through the physical approach to God, it becomes evident to us that God is pure actuality. God is life and God is act. Plato did not, however, know a personal God.

## 3. JUSTIFICATION OF GOD

**Ancient deism.** Plato was well aware of the chief problem of theodicy, the justification of God in view of the disorder, senselessness, immorality, and evil in the world. After he had proved the existence of God in answer to atheism, he turned his attention to those doubting Thomases who would indeed be only too glad to believe that God exists, but who, in view of their dysteleology (the doctrine of the purposelessness in nature), had reached the conclusion that God had indeed created the world, but when He had finished it no longer concerned Himself about it (*Laws*, 899 d-900 b;

908 b c). This is the line of reasoning characterized in modern philosophy as deism. We have already intimated how this problem in theodicy can be solved (cf. p. 76 f.).

**The view of the whole.** We are told that a specific error lies hidden in this objection that is raised against the goodness of God. Man is accustomed to judge objects and relations by means of his own limited viewpoint which takes into consideration only the subject and its momentary situation; he does not, in fact, cannot, look at the whole. If we should keep this in mind, we would find that many things would present an entirely different aspect and the accent on value would change radically. And finally we should ponder well that man's life here on earth does not represent man's whole life. There is a continued existence after death; and if we should wish to speak of the justice of God, we must also take into account what takes place in that other life. Only petty souls are accustomed to overlook and neglect facts. Noble souls, on the contrary, survey everything in their purview, even life beyond the grave, and nothing that is of importance for man escapes their scrutiny. "If you say: I am small and will creep into the depths of the earth, or I am high and will fly up to heaven, you are not so small or so high but that you should pay the fitting penalty, either here or in the world below or in some still more savage place whither you shall be conveyed" (*Laws*, 905 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 647). This is the viewpoint which we meet with in all Christian thinkers when they point to the justification of God in eternity, and which will reappear again with Kant when he tries to corroborate his postulates for the immortality of the soul.

#### 4. GOD AND MAN

**Beneficent omnipotence.** What relation exists between God and man? In the work done in the evening of his life, when the philosopher stands on the very threshold of eternity, the meaning of God occupies an exceptionally large place in his speculation. We human beings, as we read there, are only marvelous masterpieces shaped by the hands of God, fashioned perhaps as His playthings or perhaps for a more sublime purpose; in any case, we are His property, His slaves, and as it were marionettes in His hands. He alone holds the strings by which they are played and He alone directs our life. "Human affairs are hardly worth considering in earnest" (*Laws*, 803 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 588). But God will always love just and morally

good men. He is their friend. For this reason men should flee from this world.

**Imitation of God.** "To fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible" (*Theaetetus*, 176 b; ed. Jowett, Vol. II, p. 178). Next to the moral striving after self-perfection by making ourselves like to God, there is another form of union with Him, prayer.

**Prayer.** Plato recommended prayer for especially important and solemn occasions, for example, when contracting marriage or before closing a business deal. We should, however, not pray for anything transitory, for gold or silver or anything that is not truly beneficial. We should surely not believe that we can, as it were, change God's mind by our orisons and by our sacrifices, as we would perhaps persuade or bribe our neighbor. God is unchangeable. Anyone who would believe that he could by prayer or sacrifice bring the Divinity to decree an unjust fate for another human being is more wicked than a disciple of deism or atheism. The true purpose of prayer is not to beg, as children do, for what they want, but we should entreat God that we may become prudent and may live a life guided by reason. This is genuine Platonism. The prayer at the end of the *Phaedrus* mirrors the high ethos and the noble sentiments of the philosopher who belongs among the great religious spirits of all times. "Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and the inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man and he only can bear and carry" (*Phaedrus*, 279 d; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 282).

## 5. NATURAL THEOLOGY

**Religion and morality.** Plato's efforts to protect the existence of God from the onslaughts of atheism, and His providence against the attacks of the deists, and His justice and holiness against the mockeries of a magical rather than an ethical interpretation of religion are supported by considerations that are both moral and pedagogical. He is of the opinion that such teachers of false doctrine ruin souls and pervert character. But God and immortality are not doctrines which he assumes for the sake of practical, that is, moral needs.

**Faith and reason.** His theology purposes to be theoretical truth, purposes to stand justified before the tribunal of reason and not only before the judgment seat of the heart and the will. By his

reflections on the existence, essence, providence, justice, and holiness of God in the *Laws*, Plato became the founder of natural theology or theodicy, which will, in the future, play a great role in the history of philosophical thought in the West. Today when we busy ourselves with the notion of natural theology, we concentrate on its antithesis to revealed religion. This is, however, not its original meaning. The expression itself goes back to Varro, the contemporary of Cicero. Varro differentiates three different "speeches or discourses about God": the poetical (fabulous), the political, and the natural (or philosophical). Poetical theology may be equated with mythology. It has only an aesthetical meaning. The political is identical with the public cult of the state, therefore with the observance of feasts and ceremonies which the calendar prescribes. This political religion is not concerned with the true or the false but is practiced for reasons of politico-administrative nature, as Mucius Scaevola, the Roman pontifex, said so laconically but as only a true Roman could. In the case of natural theology, however, more is at stake than aesthetical pleasure and political expediency; it deals rather with the philosophical search for truth concerning God. The content of natural theology is made up of whatever man can know and prove on the basis of his own experience and of his reflection on nature and the world. This theology seeks after real truth by the aid of science. "The philosophers have left behind many books concerning this [natural] theology" (St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, Bk. VI, ch. V), as St. Augustine cites from Varro. The first in this long series of men was Plato.

### THE OLD ACADEMY

The men who taught in the Academy immediately after Plato's death are grouped together and are known to the history of philosophy under the title, the Old Academy. The leaders of the school in this period were: Plato's nephew and immediate successor, Speusippus (347-338), Xenocrates (338-314), Polemon (314-269), and Crates (269-264). One of the most renowned among the great scholars in this Old Academy was Heraclides of Pontus (see above, p. 15). His presence along with that of the famous mathematician, Philip of Opus, and the noted botanist, Diocles, leads us to surmise that in the Old Academy various branches of science were fostered in addition to philosophy. Basically, however, the school continued to retain as its essential feature the characteristics of the Pythagorean Brotherhood. Even in philosophical leadership, Pythag-

rean tendencies prevailed more than they had with the mature Plato. For this reason one of the chief problems with which the school busied itself was the relation that exists between ideas and numbers. Plato had distinguished between ideal numbers and mathematical numbers. Speusippus retained only mathematical numbers. Xenocrates maintained that ideal and mathematical numbers were identical. Another frequently discussed question was the relation that exists between sensible reality and thought, in which Plato's dualism was revived. A third problem had its origin in the theory of pleasure. Here again the thinkers mitigated Plato's dogmatism and listed external goods among the factors which produce happiness. By so doing the Academy evinced a greater liberalism than the ethics of the Cynics and Stoicks had permitted. Toward the end of the period of development, radical tendencies began to assert themselves. These were foreign to genuine Platonism: they were partly mystical, partly prescientific attitudes. They were instigated by Xenocrates: The Academy branched out into Oriental speculation. Nature was demonized. The doctrine of numbers became imaginative: number one is the first God—He is a spirit, the father and the king of the heavens; number two is feminine, the mother of the gods—she is soul and she rules the world beneath heaven. The various degrees of knowledge that Plato had championed were grossly localized: the object of knowledge is to be found at the other side of heaven, the object of sense perception is here on earth, and the object of opinion is heaven itself. Only in the Middle Academy do the tendencies again become moderate.

## CHAPTER 7

# ARISTOTLE — I: KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE LIFE

Aristotle was not a native Athenian; he came from Stagira in Thrace, where he was born in 384 B.C. His father was physician to the King of Macedonia, Amyntas. Aristotle himself linked his fate to the Macedonian ideal. With it he was to fall. At the age of eighteen he entered the Academy and remained attached to it until the death of Plato, some twenty years later. During his lifetime he greatly admired his master. In the elegy which he dedicated to him, he speaks of the friendship which bound them together, and says that Plato was a man who so surpassed the common herd that it was impossible for anyone indiscriminately to sing his praises save those who proved themselves worthy of him. The fact that later on Aristotle would differ appreciably from Plato in his thought in no way detracted from his veneration and his friendship for him. "For while both [Plato and truth] are dear, piety requires us to honor truth above our friends," wrote Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1096 a 16). But the reader has the impression, nevertheless, that Aristotle's criticism of his master was not always *sine ira et studio*. Oftentimes it is farfetched; it is not always basic and many times it is petty.

After Plato's death, Aristotle went to Assos in the principality of Troas and placed himself under the aegis of Prince Hermias of Atarneus. There, together with other members of the Academy, he founded a kind of affiliate branch of the Platonic school. But Aristotle remained in Assos only three years. After a brief stay at Mitylene in Lesbos where he met his successor, Theophrastus, he turned his footsteps to the court of Philip of Macedonia and at the latter's request assumed the education of his son, Alexander, then but thirteen years of age.

When Alexander ascended the throne in 336/335, Aristotle returned to Athens and in 335 founded in the holy precincts of Apollo Lyceus his own philosophical school, which he named after the place in which it was located, the Lyceum. Like the Academy itself it was a

*thiasos*, a religious cultural society or brotherhood in honor of and in service to the Muses. Later on, the students who attended this school were called Peripatetics; they explained that they were given this title because of their custom of walking to and fro while teaching or discussing philosophical problems. The possible derivation of such a nomenclature, however, would be much the same as the derivation of similar titles for the other schools, Academy, Lyceum, Stoa, Cepus. As with those, so this appellation had its origin in the covered ambulatory (Peripatos) which was located in the Lyceum.

In his early years, Aristotle was prolific as a writer; during his years in the Lyceum, he gradually abandoned his writing career and devoted himself more and more to teaching and scientific organizing. In Athens he founded a scientific community dedicated to research on a comprehensive scale: material on philosophy, the history of philosophy, natural science, medicine, history of archival recording, political science, and philology was accumulated and compiled by its members under the direction of Aristotle himself. Only by such activity can we adequately explain the extensive knowledge of specific subjects which Aristotle presupposes and evaluates in his own theoretical writings. This fertile period of activity lasted only twelve years.

After the death of Alexander, the anti-Macedonian faction rose to power, and Aristotle resolved to flee before he could be arraigned on charges of impiety, "lest the Athenians should sin against philosophy for the second time," as he is reported to have said, no doubt alluding to Socrates. One year later (322) he died of natural causes in Chalcis in Euboea.

We possess his last will and testament. This document is symbolic of the man and his philosophy. In the midst of life and mindful ever of its individual details, he does not lose himself in them, but lives a life based on a privileged and noble culture both of the mind and of the heart. In a peaceful manner the lonesome, exiled philosopher put his house in order, made provisions for his two children Pythias and Nicomachus as well as for the mother of the last named, remembered his slaves handsomely and freed the majority of them. To the servants who had served him personally he granted permission to remain in his house until they reached a certain age, when they were to be manumitted. Memories of his parental home flashed before his eyes, memories of his mother and brother, whom he had lost early in life, and the memory of Pythias, his first wife who had died. Wherever he was to be laid to rest, there too were her remains to

be buried, "as she herself had wished it." The last instruction requested and provided that Nicanor, his foster brother, who had served as an officer at the headquarters of Alexander, fulfill the vow which Aristotle had made for him to carry out. After a safe return to the fatherland, he should dedicate in Stagira statues four ells high to Zeus, the Savior; and to Athena, the protectress.

## W R I T I N G S

Much of what Aristotle wrote has been lost, and even what we do possess is not in very good order. On the basis of the viewpoint he had in mind when he wrote, we divide the works which Aristotle formally published into the so-called exoteric writings ( $\epsilon\xi\omega\tau\epsilon\rho\kappa\iota\lambda\gamma\iota\iota$ ,  $\epsilon\kappa\delta\epsilon\delta\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\lambda\gamma\iota\iota$ ), and those not formally published, the so-called acroamatic writings ( $\alpha\kappa\rho\alpha\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\iota\lambda\gamma\iota\iota$ ,  $\nu\pi\omega\mu\nu\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ), also known as the esoteric or doctrinal writings. Intended for the general public, the first type, dating from the years of his early manhood, were esteemed as literary masterpieces and were for the most part in the dialogue form. We possess only fragments of these. The writings of the other type were hastily drawn-up outlines designed as lectures and delivered in Assos, and especially in the Lyceum. They were first published by Andronicus of Rhodes in 60–50 B.C.; they were lost for years. After their discovery, antiquity drew its inspiration almost exclusively from them and thereby neglected the works of his more youthful years. This in turn led eventually to an almost tragic state of affairs; the philosophers forgot to take into account the intellectual development that had taken place in Aristotle in the interval and quoted from his various works indiscriminately, as if they had all been written from one and the same viewpoint and as if they were all of equal value. Only after the appearance of W. Jaeger's book (translated by R. Robinson): *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), which evaluated the fragments of his earlier works, were scholars able to form a just estimate of the speculative growth of Aristotle, and to understand his writings including the fragments in a manner befitting their chronological sequence. With this important factor in mind, we can distinguish three periods: the period of the Academy, the period of transition, and the period of his activity in the Lyceum.\*

\* The opinion that only 25 per cent of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* is genuine and all the rest the work of Theophrastus (as maintained by J. Zürcher in *Aristoteles' Werk und Geist*, 1952) is rejected by philological research on Aristotle.

**The period of the Academy.** In the first period (367–347), Aristotle continued to follow the lines laid down by Plato. In the Dialogue *Eudemos*, for example, he teaches the pre-existence and the immortality of the soul together with other similar thoughts, just as the Platonic dialogue *Phaedo* had outlined them. He also championed the intuition of ideas and the doctrine of reminiscence (*Anamnesis*) and saw in the immaterial and solely spiritual existence the real and essential being of man. Body and soul are still perfectly dualistic, for they are considered to be separate substances. Aristotle's *Protrepticus* is an appeal for a conduct of life based on pure philosophy with reference to the eternal ideas, similar to the motto which Plato had inscribed for his *Republic*: "In heaven there exists ready made a prototype, that anyone who is of good will can see it and can mold his own true self according to it." Other works of this period are the Dialogues *On Justice*, *Politics*, the *Sophist*, the *Symposium*, *On the Good*, *On Ideas*, and *On Prayer*.

**The period of transition.** The transition period is reflected in the writings he authored at Assos, Lesbos, and at the Macedonian court. Characteristic of this period is the Dialogue *On Philosophy*. In the second book of this work he offers a criticism of Plato's theory of ideas. In the third he begins to unfold the basic concepts of his own cosmology, and he gives a faint inkling of a concept basic to his own metaphysics, that of the Unmoved Mover. He continues, however, to use the concepts current in later Platonic philosophy, as we find them expressed in the *Epinomis*.

In this period there originated those earlier portions of his doctrinal writings which W. Jaeger considers as his original metaphysics (*Meta.*, I, III, XI, 1–8, XII with the exception of Chapter 8, XIII, 9 and 10, and XIV), the original ethics (*Eth. Eud.*, I, II, III, and VII), the original political philosophy (*Pol.*, II, III, VII, and VIII), and the original physics (*Phys.*, I, II; *De Coelis*, Περὶ οὐρανοῦ; *De Gen. et Cor.*, Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς).

**Lyceum.** In the period of the Lyceum we can list his other doctrinal writings with the exception of the above-mentioned earlier portions. We can distinguish five types of writings: (1) *The Works on Logic*: Κατηγορίαι (*Categoriae*, *Praedicamenta*); Περὶ ἐρμηνείας (*De Interpretatione*); Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα and ὕστερα (*Analytica Priora* et *Posteriora*); Τοπικά (*Topica*); Περὶ σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων (*De Sophisticis Elenchis*). Later on, these were gathered together and entitled the *Organon*, because the philosophers recognized that in logic was to be

found the correct procedure that should be employed by the sciences. (2) *The Metaphysical Writings*: *Φυσικὴ ἀκρόασις* (*Physica Auscultatio*), the philosophy of the natural sciences written from a metaphysical point of view, in eight books; *τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά* (*Metaphysica*), the general teaching of Aristotle on being as such, its characteristics and its causes, in fourteen books. The title is purely fortuitous and denotes only that these books were placed after the eight books of the *Physics* in the edition of the doctrinal works prepared by Andronicus. (3) *Writings on the Natural Sciences*: *Περὶ μετεώρων* (*Meteorologica*), a kind of physical geography; *Περὶ τὰ ζῶα ιστορίαι* (*Historia Animalium*), a systematic zoology in ten books: *Περὶ ζώων μορίων* (*De Partibus Animalium*), on the parts of animals; *Περὶ ζώων πορείας* (*De Incessu Animalium*), on the gait of animals; *Περὶ ζώων κινήσεως* (*De Motu Animalium*), on the movement of animals; *Περὶ ζώων γενέσεως* (*De Generatione Animalium*), on the generation of animals; *Περὶ ψυχῆς* (*De Anima*), on the soul, in three volumes. To this may be added a whole series of so-called lesser writings on the natural sciences (*Parva Naturalia*). (4) *Ethical and Political Writings*: *Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια* (*Ethica Nicomachea*), a systematic ethics in ten books, published by Aristotle's son and entitled after him; *Πολιτικά* (*Politica*), eight books on the sociological, political, and juridical philosophical theories of Aristotle; *Πολιτεία Ἀθηναίων* (*Atheniensium Res Publica*), the only constitution of the 158 collected by Aristotle that has been preserved. This was rediscovered in 1891. (5) *Philological Writings*: *Τέχνη ρητορική* (*Ars Rhetorica*), on the art of oratory; *Περὶ ποιητικῆς* (*De Poetica*), on the art of poetry.

### Spurious:

*Categories* 10–15 (*Postpraedicamenta*); Book Four of the *Meteorology*; *De Mundo*; Book Ten of the *History of Animals*; *On the Amazing Perceptions of Sound*; *On Plants*; *On Colors*; *On Indivisible Lines*; *Magna Moralia*; *Mechanics*; *Oeconomics*, *Physiognomics*; *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. *Metaphysics* I and *Physics* VII are the works of his pupils. The *Problematica* are post-Aristotelian, but are based on Aristotelian notes.

### Complete Editions:

*Aristotelis Opera*, edidit Academia Regia Borussica, 5 vols., 1831–1870 (citations are taken from this edition). Fragments: *Aristotelis Fragmenta*, edidit V. Rose (1886). A selection of the fragments with later findings has been made by H. Walzer, *Aristotelis Dialogorum Fragmenta* (1934). An English translation of the greater portion of the Aristotelian corpus is

found in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941). The Loeb Classical Library publishes the Greek text with English translation.

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## KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE

### 1. LOGIC

The general character of Aristotelian logic. Before Aristotle appeared on the scene, philosophy had dealt in some detail with knowledge and truth. But it was he who first originated a formal science of knowledge, the science of logic. And he presented it not only in a general way, but also with such classical perfection that the course he traced for it is still followed today. In speaking of Aristotle's work, Kant has emphasized his contribution to this science: since the time of Aristotle logic has never had to budge a single inch, nor has it been able to advance a single step. The basic ideas of his logic may be found in the *Prior Analytics* and *Posterior Analytics*. The titles of the books give an inkling of the character of his logic. It is an analysis of the mind. Just as anatomy dissects the body of man into various parts, so Aristotelian logic analyzes the speculation and the speech of man.

Aristotle was the first who recognized that the mind possesses a very precise structure, which consists of certain elements and basic functions and under this aspect can be both studied and described.

The ultimate elements are to be found in the *concept* (notion, idea), *judgment*, and *reasoning*. Even today these form the three most important topics of logic. Everywhere Aristotle sought to define and to divide. Even in his logic we can detect the attempt he made to investigate the sense world in all its variety and to arrange and to classify the concrete. Aristotle examined the elementary forms of the mind not only for theoretical but also for very practical purposes. He sought to offer mankind a method for unassailable, scientific speculation, demonstration, and refutation. This occurs especially in the topic and elenctic (indirect refutation of proof). His logic, as a consequence, is not only theoretical but also practical. At the same time he busied himself with the problem of how far our rational faculties, considered formally as instruments, are in order as well as whether they actually grasp the materials of knowledge which they should grasp, that is, his logic is not only formal but also material; it is, as we would say today, a theory of knowledge.

**The concept.** 1) *The concept of concept.* The ultimate element which Aristotle's analysis of the mind reveals is the concept: "I call that a term [concept] into which the premise is resolved, i.e., both the predicate and that of which it is predicated" (*Pr. Anal.*, I, 1; 24 b 16; ed. McKeon, p. 66). The concept itself is not a predication, not a judgment, and as a consequence is neither true nor false. The concept "stag," for example, is first of all only a word, as are in general all representations which Aristotle forms of a concept, especially as viewed from the aspect of language. Aristotle never offered his students a formal teaching on the concept. He appropriated whatever had already been established by Socrates and Plato: a concept is always general and embraces the permanent and the necessary, in short, whatever is essential. That the concept expresses the quiddity, the *ousia*, is constantly repeated. Aristotle thereby ascribed to the concept, implicitly at least, the function of predication. If the concept embraces the essence, it must also lead to truth; for an essence is the essence of something. This, however, was never formally conceded by Aristotle, but is rather taken for granted and is explained by the role which the idea of essence ( $\lambdaόγος τῆς οὐσίας$ ) plays in Plato, where it is presupposed as a representation of being and not simply as a constituent part of possible judgments.

2) *The definition.* The concept that is formed correctly is called a definition ( $\deltaρισμός$ ). The definition is intended to determine as precisely as possible the essence of an object so that its quiddity is

sharply differentiated from that of all other beings and becomes perfectly intelligible in its own species. The rule for such a definition is as follows: the definition is given by stating the genus and the difference which forms the species (the specific difference). This means: an object is always classified in a universal genus which is presupposed as already known. For example, the numeral three (3) is determined by the universal genus, number; since there are many numbers, the universal genus, number, must be narrowed down by a further determination, so that only 3 can be understood among the many numbers that might possibly be mentioned. This is done by giving that determinate species which is characteristic of 3 and differentiates it from all other numbers, namely, the fact that 3 is "the first uneven number" (*Post. An.*, II, 13; ed. McKeon, pp. 175–176). By the specific difference the species itself arises from the various genera. The definition, as a consequence, always denotes the concept of species.

3) *Genus and species.* In this connection, Aristotle makes use of the concepts of genus and species. What genus is and what species is he never expressly developed in his philosophy, but on one occasion he explained genus by means of species: "A 'genus' is what is predicated in the category of essence of a number of things exhibiting differences in kind [species]" (*Top.*, I, 5; 102 a 31; ed. McKeon, p. 192). He defined species by means of the genus, "species are composed of the genus and the differentiae" (*Meta.*, X, 7, 1057 b 7; ed. McKeon, p. 846). Aristotle indicated (*Post. An.*, II, 13) how we could arrive at the genus, namely, by emphasizing the identity that is common to different objects. Since he did not think of secondary identities but only of the identity of essence (for its part the essence is more precisely determined by the concept of universality — essence is nothing else than the species or the genus), we are constantly running around in circles. Genus and species are not explained materially, as, for example, by reference to the uniformity of structure or to the organs of reproduction or to hereditary properties, but only formally by the universal idea, by which the essence is determined by the universal and the universal in turn by the essence. This whole explanation, however, is not a *petitio principii* for him, because the notions of genus and *eidos* or specific form borrowed from Platonic dialectics were presupposed as something already known.

In this dialectic, moreover, the genus and the species do not need to be proved by recourse to their universal character, for they possess

their essence in their own content, which we are not forced first to obtain by abstraction from the many but which we already know apriori; as a consequence, the problem of the formation of species does not exist at all. Without the method of the diaeresis (division) there would be no Aristotelian definition. The definition is both a logical and ontological orientation within the system of concepts into which the Platonic dialectic arranges all being. It was a Platonist, Porphyry, who developed the genealogical tree of being, the so-called Porphyrian tree, which we must keep constantly before our eyes if we wish to understand genus, species, and definition in their original meaning. The outline for the formulation of a definition (*genus proximum differentia specifica*—"proximate genus and specific difference") is the outline of the Porphyrian tree. It is extremely characteristic, because of its relation to the history of philosophy, that before offering a series of rules for the framing of a definition, Aristotle describes the genus which enters into the definition as "a prior by nature and better known." This would not be a logical concept but rather the ontological *eidos* (form) of Plato. And when Aristotle demands that the definition always mention the genus that is next closest, he again follows in the footsteps of Plato, who placed great emphasis on the postulate that, in the diaeresis, no member be ever omitted (cf. p. 94). Only the concept of specific difference was introduced by Aristotle.

4) *Categories*. But something that is genuinely Aristotelian is the classification of concepts. The Stagirite discovered that the concepts which we employ in our premises can be arranged in typical groups. With this observation, Aristotle offered us the first table of categories. It contains ten schemata for forms that can be predicated. That is, our concepts designate an essence (a substance) or they express its quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, habitus, action, and passion. The categories themselves may be further divided into two broad types. On the one hand there is substance, a being that exists in itself and hence possesses a certain independence or autonomy; on the other hand there are the nine schemata, the so-called accidents: an accident is that which may be added to the substance as a more precise determination. On this there follows still another division. The accidental determinations of a substance can be proper to the substance in accordance with its essence, always and necessarily: such accidental determinations are properties, for example, that a man is able to laugh or that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to

two right angles. Or we may consider only such determinations as may or may not actually be found in a substance: common accidents. A number of these appear with a certain degree of regularity and of probability, for example, men do not always and necessarily have whiskers, but a majority of them do. Still other accidents cannot be counted upon to occur with any degree of frequency, for example, a man digging a hole to plant some flowers suddenly discovers a treasure—this is an accident, a chance event. With such facts we cannot develop any science worthy of the name. But the probable accidents do find scientific use, if not in science in the true sense of the word. True science is based on predication which are either properties or essential facts in general. As we can see from this, behind the interest of Aristotle in accidents there lies for him the problem of a theory of science.

Aristotle saw in categories not only logical but also ontological elements. Being itself may be divided in much the same fashion as his table of categories divides thought for logic. Aristotle had discovered his categories by his analysis of the judgment. They are forms of predication as they will later on be with Kant. When in contrast to Kant he explains them also as forms of being (*Meta.*, V, 7), Aristotle does so not because he had begun to doubt the possibility of a metaphysics, but because he agreed with Parmenides that mind and being correspond with one another.

**The judgment.** 1) *Essence and species.* When two concepts are joined together in order to make possible a predication concerning reality, either affirming or denying it, we have a judgment. Because the judgment is intended to be essentially a predication, it is also the genuine source of the true and the false. For this reason the judgment is differentiated from other combinations of concepts, for example, from those that appear in the expression of a wish or in the affection of a prayer. Aristotle also describes and divides the judgment. There are affirmative and negative judgments (quality of judgments); universal, particular, and singular judgments (quantity); judgments of facts, necessity, and possibility (modality). In this connection, Aristotle manifested a great deal of interest in the convertibility of judgments (*Pr. An.*, I, 2 and 3).

2) *The function of judgments.* But much more important is the question of the function of judgments. By venturing an answer, we penetrate deeply into the essence of Aristotelian philosophy. "Now definition [concept] reveals essential nature, demonstration [scientific

judgment] reveals that a given attribute attaches or does not attach to a given subject" (*Post. An.*, II, 3; 91 a 1; ed. McKeon, pp. 161-162). The judgment develops further the genesis of knowledge which had begun with the concept. The attributes of which Aristotle speaks here are nothing other than the accidents which we have already mentioned. It is important to observe that the accidents possess a definite relation to substance. Aristotle had recognized this and as a consequence divided them accordingly. By so doing we are shown that at least for him being is regulated and put into a definite order by definite inner relationships. To uncover these is the task of scientific judgment. Science is not a monologue of the mind on the basis of special rules, as is often supposed in modern times, but a dialogue of the mind with the world of being with which it enjoys equality of rights and over against which it stands.

3) *What is truth?* To this corresponds the Aristotelian notion of truth. This has a decidedly objective character. "To say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" (*Meta.*, IV, 7; 1011 b 27; ed. McKeon, p. 749). "It is not because we think truly that you are pale, that you *are* pale, but because you are pale we who say this have the truth" (*Meta.*, IX, 10; 1051 b 7; ed. McKeon, p. 833). The truth does not depend, therefore, upon a subjective viewpoint, upon faith or a mere wish, upon the usefulness or the fruitfulness of a theory, upon the spirit of the times or upon blood or race. This philosopher of ancient Greece was able to represent to himself as truth only a proposition which reproduced the objectivity of reality. Modern psychologism or pragmatism would have been possible for the Sophists, but not for Aristotle.

4) *Logical predication.* But how can we be certain of the truth? The above-cited text gives us an explanation: "He who thinks the separated to be separated and the combined to be combined has the truth, while he whose thought is in a state contrary to that of the objects is in error" (*Meta.*, IX, 10, 1051 b 38-40; ed. McKeon, p. 833). This corresponds with the definition of judgment as a union or conjoining of concepts or notions. What plays the decisive role in the unitive possibilities of concepts, the content of the concept, or the insight into reality? Neo-Scholastics who consciously adopt the views of Aristotle speak of a *convenientia* or a *discrepantia conceptuum inter se* (an agreement or disagreement of concepts among themselves) and see in the positive or negative opinion on the compatibility of concepts the essence of a judgment. This would make it appear as

if the meaning of the concept alone were decisive. The judgment would then consist of an analysis of concepts, and the ultimate decisive principle would not be reality, but the principle of identity or of contradiction. In this rationalistic fashion we must understand the judgment that Plato had before his eyes, a judgment in which the predication is actually contained, as E. Hoffmann has so correctly noted, in the *methexis*; that is, the predicate *shares in* or *partakes of* the nature of the subject. In it the judgment copula, "is," means simply an identity of the content of the concepts involved. Aristotle, however, in his *Metaphysics* (IX, 10) refers very distinctly to reality. Even the possible union or the possible separation of concepts is made to depend upon reality, and not upon the meaning of the concepts as such. By this Aristotle adopted a position different from that of Plato. For Plato the Logos is reality itself. Ideas are called *αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα* (things themselves), and here we can pass judgment rationally and analytically on the compatibility or the incompatibility of the concepts on the basis of the content of the concepts themselves. By appealing to reality rather than to the concept, Aristotle gives us clearly to understand that he intends to travel by other paths than those which Plato used. The Logos is only a means of thinking, only a way to reality; it is not reality itself.

5) *The subject of judgment.* Matters are quite different where the subject of the judgment is concerned. Aristotle realized that the essence of the judgment as a predication necessarily required a subject of which it is predicated, but which could not be the predicate itself. But what is the subject of the judgment? Patently it must always be something definite, for we cannot predicate anything of something that is indefinite. It is evident that an accident does not offer us the answer to the difficulty. For the subject of a judgment presupposes, in order to exist, a substance. Therefore it must be the substance, *ousia*, the quiddity, the *τὸ τι ἵνε εἶναι* — that which a thing is, for example the being or the quiddity which belongs to man. This last interpretation startles us. If the quiddity as the subject of a judgment must belong to something, in this case to a man, is it really a subject, an ultimate of which something is predicated but which is itself no longer a predicate? It belongs to the dative case and is predicated of it; for example, if I say that Callias is a man, in this instance I mean that humanity belongs to Callias.

Aristotle, however, found a way out of the difficulty; he made a distinction between first and second substances. Only the first sub-

stance is something that is unique and entirely particular—precisely this man Callias—and only the first substance is a substance in the true sense of the word, because it alone can never be predicated, but conversely it is itself the subject of a predication. This is the judgment which leads Aristotle to a basic concept of his entire philosophy, and we should never lose sight of it when we attempt to evaluate the Aristotelian concept of substance. The second substance is that which is common to several individuals; it is the species, the specific essence, for example, man in general; this may also be predicated. While we would naturally expect that Aristotle would explain *ousia* (essence) in the sense of the first substance as the ideal subject of a judgment, this is surprisingly enough not the case; rather it is the second substance in the sense of a specific essence to which Aristotle looks for the subject of his scientific judgment. By so doing he pays tribute to the Platonic method of reasoning. Although according to his own philosophy the first substance is substance absolutely and to him everything particular stands in the foreground, he nevertheless permits science to remain in that region to which Plato had consigned it: in the realm of universal essences. And although Aristotle rejects the concept of the world of ideas (*κόσμος νοητός*), he still remains enough of a Platonist to consider solely the universal as the object of science. Science does not concern itself with Callias or with individuals, but with man as such; and in like fashion with other substances. The particular is an “ineffable,” i.e., something inexpressible which can never be exhausted by means of universal concepts. By this theory Aristotle made possible a correct evaluation of the particular in its solitary singularity.

**The syllogism.** 1) *The position of the syllogism in Aristotelian logic.* His theory concerning the syllogism in its ideal form constitutes the solid center of Aristotelian logic. His disciples recognized in it an original contribution and later centuries employed it with fluent artistry. His adversaries ridiculed it as a play upon words and as dialecticism. In any case, Aristotle developed it with special care, described its various forms, formulated rules for its use, and took care to point out various errors which might possibly occur in its conclusions. This was necessary, for the syllogism was to him the foundation of all sciences. To develop a science meant to prove, and the syllogism was proof absolutely.

2) *The notion and forms of the syllogism.* “A syllogism is a discourse in which certain things being stated, something other than

that which is stated follows of necessity from their being so" (*Pr. An.*, I, 1; 24 b 18; ed. McKeon, p. 66). What is stated as preliminary are two judgments, the so-called premises, namely, the major and the minor. What follows of itself from these two simply because they are so stated is the conclusive proposition, the conclusion. In these propositions there appear three concepts (or terms), no more and no less: the major, the middle, and the minor terms. The middle term or concept is the core of the syllogism. It joins the major and the minor terms, and by so doing makes it possible for the conclusion to follow from the premises. How this must be understood we shall see just as soon as we finish considering the three figures of the syllogism. In this field Aristotle is again the anatomist of the mind who studies and develops the operations of the reasoning process in its basic forms.

The first figure of the syllogism possesses the following form: "Whenever three terms are so related to one another that the last is contained in the middle as in a whole, and the middle is either contained in, or excluded from, the first as in or from a whole, the extremes must be related by a perfect syllogism" (*Pr. An.*, I, 4; 25 b 32-35; ed. McKeon, p. 68). Expressed in logical symbols: *A* is predicated of the whole of *B*; *B* is the predicate of the whole of *C*; therefore *A* is the necessary predicate of the whole of *C*. When *A* is predicated of *B*, *B* comes under the extension of *A* (if all men are mortal, the concept "man" enters into the sphere of the concept, "mortal"); when *B* is predicated of *C*, *C* is brought into the sphere of *B* and also into the sphere of *A*. This results simply from the relation of the notions to one another, and does so with necessity. In the first figure the middle term (according to the definition of Aristotle *B* stands in the middle) was the subject of the major premise (*B* is *A*), and the predicate of the minor premise (*C* is *B*). If we should change its position so that it would become the predicate of the major and the minor premises, we would have the second figure. And if it should become the subject not only of the major but also of the minor premise, we would have the third figure. For each figure there are four variations, the so-called modes, each according to the quantity and the quality of the premises. We encounter these in every systematic logic, for the teaching concerning the conclusion and the syllogism is still presented even today as it was originally propounded by Aristotle.

The syllogism is always deduction: the derivation of a particular from a universal. Aristotle also admitted induction: the derivation

of the universal from particular instances. He gave to this derivation (i.e., the induction) the form of a syllogism, but one that is a syllogism in form only. If the universal results from an examination of every individual instance, Aristotle calls this type of induction an *epagoge* (an argument by induction). If all the individual instances cannot be sifted, it is then called a paradigmatic syllogism (*Pr. An.*, II, 23 f.). As a further form of the syllogism Aristotle recognized the *enthymeme*, in which a conclusion is drawn from a sign which is connected with certain facts (*Pr. An.*, II, 27), the probable syllogism (*eikos*), in which only probable propositions form the basis of the syllogism (*Pr. An.*, II, 27); the *enstase*, in which one premise is contrary to the other (*Pr. An.*, II, 26); furthermore the dialectical, otherwise called the *epicheireme*, which is based not on logical necessity but on the opinion of experts (*endoxa*); the rhetorical, which is designed to persuade; the *eristic*, which employs only fallacious reasons and offers only a fallacious conclusion and is therefore generally only a fallacy (a *paralogism*).

Aristotle devoted a great deal of attention to the question: Is the syllogism scientific or not? Only the demonstrative syllogism (apodictic syllogism) which results in a logically necessary inference is scientific; it is the syllogism as such. In such a syllogism the supposition is that the basic propositions are certain. How, we shall soon see. In a number of the above-mentioned special syllogistic forms this cannot always be verified.

3) *The purpose of the syllogism.* In what does the specific force of the syllogism, its so-called stringency, consist? Its force consists in this, that the final term is contained in the middle, and the middle in the first term; by this means the derivation of the last term from the first is made possible and follows logically. If, for example, the following syllogism is valid: "All men are mortal. But Socrates is a man. Therefore Socrates is mortal," it is valid because the being of Socrates is contained in his humanity; it is thus truly stated. Thus, to prove a thing means to see that which we seek to prove in the thing itself; whether it is identical with it or contained in its extension is ultimately a matter of indifference.

4) *Aristotelian syllogism and Platonic dialectics.* It is extremely important for us to possess clear notions on the method of reasoning that has been employed thus far. If we should keep before our eyes the explanation of the first figure of the syllogism to which, according to Aristotle, all other figures can be reduced — the minor is contained

in the middle term, and the middle in the major term—we are reminded almost unconsciously of Platonic dialectics, which was also concerned with the concept of *methexis* (participation). There the subordinate *eidos* (form) is contained in the superior and proceeds from it, because it is established by it; on this account the *eidos* (form) in the works of Plato is also designated as hypothesis, a terminology which appears literally in Aristotle (*Pr. An.*, I, 1; 24 b 10). The Aristotelian syllogism is Platonic dialectic. If we should not conceive of the syllogism in this fashion, it would become meaningless; to infer from the universal assertion that all men are mortal that Socrates is also mortal would be the most useless thing in the world: it would be entirely superfluous. For have I not already stated this when I determined in general that all men are mortal? What is left for me to infer? Aside from the fact that when I state the proposition that all men are mortal, I must myself have known beforehand that Socrates was mortal. But when I, as does Plato, know all individual things by reason of a superior idea, when the superior idea itself is not derived from the particular but the particular from it, then it is reasonable to see in the premises the conclusion which is drawn from them. The Aristotelian syllogism is for this reason a part of metaphysics, not merely a chess game with concepts as pieces, as logic not infrequently represents it.

5) *The apriori by nature and the better known.* We would appreciate this the more if we should ask ourselves the question: What is meant by the “logically prior” or the so-called “logical demonstration,” of which mention is made so frequently in all the sciences. “Logical demonstration,” as has been so frequently stated, is proof; proof deals with the “logical prior,” with premises through which something posterior is established. This view is actually genuine Aristotelian logic. In his philosophy, the logically prior is called the *πρότερον καὶ γνωριμώτερον* (*σαφέστερον*), the “prior and better known”; *πρότερον τῇ φύσει*, the “prior by nature”; or *πρότερον ἀπλῶς*, the “wholly prior.” He distinguishes it from the *πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, “the prior in regard to us” and offers as an explanation: That which is prior in regard to us, that means, in regard to our knowledge, is always the concrete particular of which sense knowledge makes us cognizant. On the other hand, that which is prior by its very nature, and which is also the better known, is the universal which in regard to our knowledge is always posterior, because first of all we perceive, according to Aristotle, the particular (*Top.*, VI, 4; *Phys.*, I, 1; *Pr. An.*, II, 23;

*Post. An.*, I, 2). Modern logic develops this thought by explaining: the universal is prior in the sense of being logical proof. But what does the phrase "logically prior" actually mean? If actually all knowledge proceeds from the particular and the sensible, it is meaningless to say that the universal is prior and it is much more without point to say that it is better known or more certain. All this would be true if it were based on the Platonic theory of knowledge, according to which every *eidos* (form) is something prior or something better known than that which only shares in or is a part of it. Likewise for Aristotle, that which by nature is prior or better known is always the universal *eidos* (form) of the  $\tau\ddot{o}\ \tau\acute{i}\ \eta\nu\ \epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\iota$ , "that which it is to be, the substance" (*Top.*, VI, 4; 141 b 22 ff.; *Meta.*, VI, 3; 1029 a 29 ff.). In his theories on demonstration and on proof, Aristotle still thought entirely in a Platonic manner. The classical text for such an assertion is *Posterior Analytics*, I, 2; 72 a 25 b, 4, where he explains: That is better known by which something else is that which it is, as, for example, "the cause of our loving anything is dearer to us than the object of our love" (ed. McKeon, p. 113) or put in another way: That is more  $\phi\acute{i}\lambda\omega\nu$  (desirable) by which a  $\phi\acute{i}\lambda\omega\nu$  (desirable thing) becomes a  $\phi\acute{i}\lambda\omega\nu$  (desirable thing). And in *Metaphysics*, V, 11; 1019 a 2 ff., it is said directly that the use of the terminology "by nature prior" is Platonic. With this metaphysical reality Aristotle also "offers proof." "Notions" are in no sense reasons, because always and in every respect they are posterior; only a being is a reason insofar as it is a foundation, an hypothesis of the Platonic dialectic. If the logically prior should have any meaning, it would have it only in this sense. Notions or propositions can appear as reasons only in the philosophy of Kant, and under the influence of his philosophy there actually occurs that change whereby Aristotelian syllogistics is watered down and loses its metaphysical content. By and through Kant, philosophers lost sight of the connection of the Aristotelian syllogism with Plato. In the  $\delta\rho\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\iota$  (definitions) thinkers see in place of the  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\iota\tau\acute{e}s\ o\acute{u}\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\acute{s}$  (bases of substance) only modern "notions," and this is true also of Neo-Scholasticism.

## 2. THE ESSENCE AND THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Since the Aristotelian syllogism always proceeds from presuppositions, there naturally arises the question concerning the source of knowledge; for we would all like to know to what these assumed propositions, these premises, owe their origin. Upon this depends ou-

knowledge as well as the certitude of the syllogism. And since, according to Aristotle, the syllogism exists only for science and actually forms its entire inner framework, the question is above all else an inquiry into the essence and the source of our scientific knowledge.

**The essence of science.** According to Aristotle two things are characteristic of the essence of science: it is knowledge based on reasons, and its propositions are concerned with circumstances and facts which are strictly necessary and hence cannot be other than they are (*Post. An.*, I, 2). Precisely these two conditions are verified in the syllogism. "Since the object of pure scientific knowledge cannot be other than it is, the truth obtained by demonstrative knowledge will be necessary. And since demonstrative knowledge is only present when we have a demonstration, it follows that demonstration is an inference from necessary premises" (*Post. An.*, I, 4; 73 a 21-25; ed. McKeon, p. 115). The necessary circumstances and facts which cannot be otherwise are known along with the essence, with the "itselfness" of things. They are either essential attributes or at least properties. For this reason the syllogism and all science are, in the mind of Aristotle, nothing else than an analysis of essences. "Demonstrative knowledge must rest on necessary basic truths . . . attributes attaching essentially to their subjects attach necessarily to them . . . and we see that the scientific conclusion follows from necessary essential attributes" (*Post. An.*, I, 6; 74 b 5-8; ed. McKeon, p. 119). The foundation and starting point of strict science is accordingly always a knowledge of essences. And in this knowledge we have knowledge based on a reason. "To know a thing's nature is to know the reason why it is" (*Post. An.*, II, 2; 90 a 32; ed. McKeon, p. 160). Because of this the knowledge of essence far surpasses the knowledge of bare facts. True scientific proof is proof based on the essence (*demonstratio propter quid*), that is, an insight into the "why" that is known along with the essence ( $\deltaιότι$ ); it is decidedly not an appeal to the "that" ( $ὅτι$ ) of bare facts (*demonstratio quia*). Thus we can better appreciate the meaning and the importance of the syllogism in the Aristotelian theory of knowledge. The *Posterior Analytics* gives us to understand that the four questions about the "that," the "why," the "whether a thing is," and "what it is" may be reduced to two: whether there is a "middle," and what this "middle" is. "For the 'middle' here is precisely the cause, and it is the cause that we seek in all our inquiries" (II, 2; 90 a 6-7; ed. McKeon, p. 159). It is extremely significant of the character of Aristotle's concept of science that the "what" is

accorded a far greater importance than the "that." Science as conceived by Aristotle is an analysis of essence and by such rationalism he again revivifies a portion of Platonism; for in the idea the entire reality that is comprised under the "what" is contained. And this is true not only of the *Analytics* which we must date fairly early, but also of his later writings, as, for example, *Metaphysics* VI and VII (1025 b 17; 1041 a 27) and *De Anima*, II (413 a 13 ff.). Those who speak constantly of the empiricism of Aristotle should not overlook this point.

Men of today perhaps first stress in the Aristotelian concept of science the fact that for Aristotle science exists solely for the sake of knowledge and of truth, hence for itself alone. It does not serve any utilitarian purpose. Tasks of this type are performed by *Technē* (art), *Empireia* (experiment), *Phronesis* (prudence) (*Meta.*, I, 1; *Eth. Nic.*, VI, 3-8; *Pol.*, I, 11). Genuine science, however, especially as it is propounded in philosophy, the ideal form of knowledge, is always a pure theoretical intuition of the truth. It is an "autarch" or self-ruling, as noted in *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 7, where Aristotle sings a paean to the philosophical consideration of truth, of its perfect renunciation of every utilitarian fixation of purpose. It is for this reason also a sign of true human freedom; in fact, it is something divine, something infinitely enrapturing. All this is for the Stagirite a matter of course. It is much more important to understand that for him the essence of science, no matter whether it is *Episteme* (knowledge) or *Nous* (scientia) or *Sophia* (wisdom), is always an insight into essential attributes: analysis, deduction, intuition, "contemplation of the essence" in its ancient meaning. This is the meaning of his teaching that science is basically syllogistic; "scientific knowledge is, then, a state of capacity to demonstrate" ( $\epsilon\kappa\iota\sigma$  ἀποδεικτική, *scientia argumentativa*, "argumentative science"), as he was accustomed to say (*Eth. Nic.*, VI, 7; 1139 b 31; ed. McKeon, p. 1025).

**The principles of knowledge.** How are the essences which are analyzed in science established for us? This is a categorical question which arises as soon as we attempt to construct science on the basis of the premises of syllogisms. We could naturally attempt to derive the premises, be they concepts or propositions, from prior propositions, that is, syllogistically; we could, in turn, derive the premises from their proofs and proceed in the same manner continually. This would inevitably lead to an infinite regress. Aristotle rejected such a procedure, because for him there would then be no demonstrative

science. He assumes primary, immediate insights which are basic to all demonstration and need no further proof. "The premises of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause" (*Post. An.*, I, 2; 71 b 20; ed. McKeon, p. 112). Subsequent scholars fashioned from these the *iudicia per se nota*, "judgments known immediately." In this matter Aristotle is again in his element. He is afforded an opportunity to define and to divide. Under these conditions it would have been very desirable if Aristotle could have fallen back upon revealed notions or propositions as the later Christian theologians actually did. Then the *scientia argumentativa* would have been perfect. However, in the ancient period, the philosophers, with the aid of the syllogistic technique, could perform a task that was fairly easy, namely, analyze that stock of ideas that had been established in other ways in order to be able to interpret them in this connection and to make them capable of being understood more clearly. This would have been "faith" and at the same time science, in fact, "demonstrative" science. Or if Aristotle could have, as had Plato, taken for granted certain aprioristic contents of knowledge, this procedure would have been practically the same. Then dialectics could have begun to function. But the first-mentioned he did not as yet possess, and the last-named was no longer in his possession. He had to turn, therefore, to other quarters for his principles.

And so he arrived at the conclusion that there could be and actually were various principles of science. On the one hand we have propositions which are purely formal and actually self-evident, the so-called axioms. These cannot be proved, because every proof must take them for granted. They are to be found everywhere but especially in mathematics. The most universal axiom is the principle of contradiction. "It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be, when it is considered from the same point of view." Akin to this is the assertion drawn from the excluded third: "Between two members of a contradictory 'dilemma' there is no middle. Either the one or the other is true; there cannot be a third." But by such purely formal principles we cannot advance very far. We need material starting points in the realm of knowledge. These are given to us in postulates: propositions upon whose truth content we do not pass judgment, which we assume as the basis of our proof in order to ascertain whether or not they hold true. Furthermore, we have hypotheses:

propositions which tentatively enunciate an assertion concerning reality. Especially noteworthy among these material principles are definitions: declarations of the "quiddity" of objects. These are the special criteria of syllogisms. "It is from 'what a thing is' that syllogisms start" (*Meta.*, VII, 9; 1034 a 31; ed. McKeon, p. 796). This sounds entirely Platonic. From what source do we know "what a thing is (quiddity)"? Where does our knowledge of man, of life, and of the soul originate?

**The source of knowledge in general.** With such queries we arrive at last at the question which deals with the source of our knowledge in general. And here it appears as if Aristotle departs from Plato. According to Plato, notions of essence were apriori. The universal is prior to the particular, for the particular is first interpreted and understood solely by means of the universal. Aristotle, however, explains that for our human knowledge, the particular is first known and that we gain knowledge of the universal through it. Concepts and definitions are indeed principles of syllogistic knowledge, but they are not the final source of knowledge; the ultimate source is to be found in experience: "It is clear that we must get to know the primary premisses by induction; for the method by which even sense-perception [*Epagoge*] implants the universal is inductive" (*Post. An.*, II, 19; 100 b 4; ed. McKeon, pp. 185-186). Or: "The universals are reached from particulars" (*Eth. Nic.*, VI, 12; 1134 b 4; ed. McKeon, p. 1033). From these statements it would seem that induction is prior to and more important than deduction.

1) *Sense perception.* For Aristotle all knowledge begins with sense perception. There is nothing in the intellect which is not made present there through the medium of senses. "If the science [of metaphysics] were actually innate, it were strange that we are unaware of our possession of the greatest of sciences" (*Meta.*, I, 9; 993 a 1; ed. McKeon, p. 711). For this reason animate beings are equipped with sense organs. If one of the senses is missing, the knowledge that corresponds to it is also absent. A blind man, for instance, has no knowledge of color. Because of this fact it was clear to Aristotle that all knowledge has its origin in the senses. Aristotle rehabilitates sense knowledge, which had been attacked by the critique of Plato. To Aristotle it was not so untrustworthy as his teacher would have had us believe. On the contrary, every sense, so long as it operates within its own area, is always true. It is only through the judgment, which applies its data to determined objects, that error can ever arise.

The perceptions of the senses always bring the soul knowledge of some form. The form is indeed imbedded in sensible reality, but by means of sense perception it can again be brought out as pure form. The pure form of the signet ring can be imprinted upon a piece of wax without the make-up of the ring, the matter of the ring itself—its gold or its silver—appearing. In a similar fashion, we have in our souls the first universal, the sensible form as such, the *εἶδος αἰσθητόν*, the so-called *species sensibilis* of the Latins (*De An.*, II, 12; *Post. An.*, II, 19). In this we are dealing with sensible representations, with phantasms. If a series of phantasms of the same kind become associated in our memory, we form from them the representations of still higher universality. Thus we obtain, first of all, the image of a certain animal, e.g., of a horse, which possesses something of universality in it. Should several such representations, e.g., of a horse, of a lion, of a wolf, combine, from them would arise the representation of an animal in general. This latter representation has already reached such a high degree of universality that it approaches very closely to the permanent universal notion and could easily be transformed into one. This representation is therefore called the *εἶδος ἐπιστητόν* (*species intelligibilis*). It is in essence still a sensible representation and can be found in a mortal, inferior spiritual faculty, the so-called passive intellect (*νοῦς παθητικός, intellectus passivus*).

2) *Non-sensible knowledge.* The “active [agent] intellect” (*νοῦς ποιητικός*, as Alexander Aphrodisias will later on term it) takes possession of these intelligible species and draws from them the notional, ideational essence. This was concealed potentially in the phantasm. By means of the active creative function of the Nous or intellect, that which had been potential now becomes actual. The Nous does not think without phantasms; but it does this entirely of itself by reason of its own activity when it brings the quiddity actually to the consciousness of the mind, just as the artist by his activity brings out of the material he uses that which was potentially contained in it. The Nous which forms these non-sensible notions is consequently a creative principle which of itself develops the notional essence, but not under the determining influence of the phantasms which are only material; for it is “separable, impassible, unmixed . . . in its essential nature activity.” This active intellect is, as a consequence, something eternal and something immortal. (See *De An.*, III, 5.)

3) *Abstraction or intuition of the essences?* To describe the origin of the *species intelligibilis* from the *species sensibilis*, Aristotle had

previously used for the first time the expression "abstraction" (*ἀφελεῖν*). And also here, where he describes the operation of the Nous (intellect), he speaks again of the "faculty of abstraction" in the Nous and interprets it to mean the origin of spiritual or immaterial concepts. In it there is actually "a lifting out of" and a "drawing out from." But what kind of abstraction is this?

We can best understand the essential ideas contained in it by comparing it with modern abstraction as described by Locke and Hume. To them the concept is nothing more than the sensible representation of a universal. It is the average value which emerges from a series of experiences, because we pass over the individual differences and retain only the typical. Abstraction means, therefore, a purely psychological process which is concerned with the development of representations as such. The "notion" or "concept" simply binds these representations together, but abstains from making a pronouncement about the structure of being. Substances or essences cannot be recognized.

In Aristotelian abstraction, however, it is precisely the ideal structure of being that is recognized, *eidos* (species) and *morphe* (form). The concept is the reason, the root basis, of the substance (*λόγος τῆς οὐσίας*). For this reason there is a science of metaphysics for Aristotle; for Locke and Hume there is none. In Aristotelian abstraction, furthermore, the concept is not first formed in the course of a psychological process, by the amalgamation or the attrition or the simplification of representations, but a fully developed ontological entity is exposed, sometimes even out of a single sense perception; for the universal is not apprehended by means of a comparison, but as a result of an "irradiation." The universal essence rises to view under the activity of the Nous just as does color when light illuminates it. For this reason we should stop speaking of abstraction in Aristotle unless we place some strictures on its meaning. His abstraction is the intuition of the essence, an abstraction that is gained and performed intuitively. To him sense knowledge is as little an efficient cause as it was with Plato. It is only a material cause and consequently cannot actuate the Nous. No matter how insufficient the description of the "active [agent] intellect" is in *De Anima*, III, 5, it is clear that this "intellect" is, in contrast to sense knowledge, "unmixed and unbiased" (*ἀμιγῆς, ἀπαθῆς*). It is self-activated and creative as is the artist in contact with his material. And precisely by such a view is the internal bearing of Aristotle's

conception of the source of knowledge related to that of Plato. To Plato the idea is not a product of sensible reality but an apriority by essence. In the Nous of Aristotle lies concealed Platonic apriorism. That the experience of the senses delivers material is not a new idea. Plato himself made use of the senses and their data. When Aristotle polemicizes against Plato in this connection, we must bear in mind that his argument oftentimes is based on peripheral reasons and realities, whereas he personally was basically in accord with his master's thought.

4) *Aristotle as empiricist.* In another sense, though, we are justified in calling him an empiricist as opposed to Plato: not in principle, in matters which are concerned with the origin of knowledge—in this respect he is a rationalist—but in a practical methodological respect. From this standpoint he employs and utilizes sense experiences to a greater extent than did Plato. For Plato was a spirit given more to speculative synthesis; conversely, Aristotle formally organized individual experimentation and research, collected observations and encouraged them to be gathered, kept in touch with the opinions of others, and posed his own aporias or philosophical difficulties in order to report experience from as many sides as possible. We can still observe this in his accounts of beasts—observations which are still respected today—in his collection of the constitutions of states, as well as in his outlines of the history of philosophy and of the history of civilization. In these subjects he enters everywhere into detail, *in extenso*; he loves the concrete, whereas Plato kept always before his eyes the great universal ideas and by them he understood the particulars.

# CHAPTER 8

## ARISTOTLE — II: BEING AND BEINGS

### BEING AND BEINGS

#### 1. THE CONCEPT OF METAPHYSICS

Even Aristotelian logic bore a relation to being: the concept was a revelation of essence; the judgment, a statement of facts and circumstances; the syllogism, a means for attaining a more complete grasp of reality. Hence it is quite understandable that Aristotle's name should be as closely connected with metaphysics as it is with logic. He furthermore wrote the first metaphysics. This again has become, as has his logic, a lodestar down to our day, even though he did not call his work "metaphysics"—this name appears first with Boethius (d. A.D. 525)—but "first philosophy" or wisdom.

What does he mean by it? Aristotle conceived of a science which investigated not only particular areas of being, as, for example, medicine or mathematics, but also universal being, which is found everywhere, hence of being as such and whatever might be connected with it. "There is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature" (*Meta.*, IV, 1; 1003 a 21; ed. McKeon, p. 73). In this definition metaphysics is called the science of being, ontology. All sciences deal constantly with being and take for granted a whole series of notions which are directly and immediately connected with it, notions, for example, of identity, variety, genus, species, whole and parts, perfection, unity, necessity, and reality (see *Meta.*, V). Every scientist, not just this one or that one, makes use of these notions. They are therefore truly universal, known quantities along with being as such. But not one of the scientists up to Aristotle's time had examined and subjected them to a thoroughgoing scrutiny. They were taken for granted without being analyzed. For this reason there was need of a science to study in a critical way these ideas so frequently used, the most universal,

but at the same time the least understood, being and its properties, and this science was *first philosophy* or metaphysics.

Because universal being lays the foundation for and is the basis of all areas of being and of all individual beings, and because everything, so to speak, exists by reason of it, Aristotle was also able to define metaphysics as the science of first principles and of first causes (*τὰ πρῶτα καὶ αἴτια*, "the first causes"; *Meta.*, I, 2; ed. McKeon, p. 691).

In a third definition of metaphysics, Aristotle says that first philosophy is the science of the Unmoved Mover and of a Being existing for Itself (*περὶ χωριστὰ καὶ ἀκίνητα*, "concerning the separate and immovable"), hence the science of God, the Unmoved Mover, the first Cause of all things that exist in any way whatsoever. And in this meaning metaphysics is "theology" (*Meta.*, VI, 1; ed. McKeon, p. 778).

Does not metaphysics consequently become only a partial science which investigates only a limited area of being, namely, theological matters? In this last definition philosophers did actually perceive and construe a contradiction to those definitions that had previously been ventured; they were of the opinion that this concept of metaphysics was the one that had been advocated by the younger Aristotle while still Platonizing. In it there were evident those Platonic-theologizing tendencies which sharply separated the realm of the sensible from the suprasensible; whereas the definition of being as being (*ὅν γένεται*), which belonged to the later Aristotle, reduced all beings to one, great, unified, though graduated arrangement. This, in Jaeger's view, would be more Aristotelian. But the science of a first principle and of an Unmoved Mover is not a contradiction of the science of being as such, but only its protraction. If being as such should be examined, this examination would lead to a final independent or autonomous foundation or basis of being; for the search after a foundation is one of the primary viewpoints which Aristotle invoked in his ontology. Theology and ontology are not to Aristotle, as has become the fashion in modern times since Christian Wolff, two separate sciences; rather theology is the climax and the crown of ontology, not only in the philosophy of the younger but also of the mature Aristotle.

## 2. CLARIFICATION OF BEING THROUGH PRINCIPLES (GENERAL METAPHYSICS)

Aristotle approached the notion of being from four different viewpoints, from the first four causes or principles; and by such principles he understood exactly what St. Thomas Aquinas himself did by

them. For Aristotle, a principle is “that from which something proceeds in some fashion or another.” In the principles we are shown the substrata and the causes by means of which being is set in motion: its becoming, its forms, the entire cosmic process are developed for us. Through these, being itself is clarified. There are the substances and the form (*οὐσία, μορφή*), matter (*ὕλη*), the cause of movement (*τὸ ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως*), and purpose (*τὸ οὗ ἔνεκα*) (*Meta.*, I, 3). These were present in philosophy before the advent of Aristotle. But in him they are conceived anew, harmonized, and reduced to an orderly system which permits being to be developed from the threshold of nothing to the infinite.

**Ousia or substance.** If being as such is to be developed and clarified as it should, the notion of *ousia* (substance) would present itself to us immediately and naturally, for *ousia* was actually called being and was employed extensively in philosophy before Aristotle, especially by Plato.

1) *Analogy of being.* But Aristotle immediately recognized that this notion is not univocal: “There are many senses in which a thing may be said to ‘be’” (*Meta.*, IV, 2; 1003 a 33; ed. McKeon, p. 732). Socrates, an individual, has “being”; the universal concept of man as such has “being”; a property always accidental to a substance has “being”; an epistemological principle, such as that of identity, has “being,” for  $2 \times 2$  “is” 4. A body has one kind of being and the soul another; the actual has being but the possible also has being; we ascribe being to the past which was and also to the future which is not yet. What is the genuine and primary meaning of the notion? Aristotle makes use of an example, the notion of health: we describe a certain condition of the body as healthy; we say also of the color in a man’s face that it is healthy, but in this last sense it is only the sign of health; we call a medicine healthy, because it restores health; a food healthy, because it preserves health. The notion of health is used in all these instances neither in exactly the same sense (univocally), nor in such a way that the meaning contained in it denotes something entirely different (equivocally), but rather in an “analogous” sense. In such usages there is present basically a genuine and a primary meaning; and this is the sense in which we understand it when we apply the notion to describe the condition of the body (*Meta.*, IV, 2). And so it is with the notion of being: it is predicated in an analogous sense. The being which we assert of God, of the world, of the soul and of the body, of substance and of accident does not apply to all

in exactly the same sense, although we use the same word in calling them "being." It does not apply to them in the same way that the term "creature" can be given to men and animals. Nor, when we use the same word, does it possess an entirely different sense, as when we call both a fishing lure and an insect a "fly," but it is understood analogously.

2) *The original meaning of being.* But in such usage there is present a primary meaning which is indicative of the other meanings that are derived from being. This primary meaning is implied in the being of the first substance, hence in the concrete, individual, autonomous reality. Being in its primary meaning is found in Socrates, not in man as such; nor is it present in a quality attributed to Socrates, but in a substance which supports qualities as accidents. Why? Aristotle answers: when we are asked about the essence of a thing, we give the best reply not by a general assertion, but by a concrete, individual answer. This particular individual, Socrates, or this specific horse would not be correctly described in his or its singularity if I were to say: This is a man, that is a horse. The correct procedure is to present Socrates or that particular horse in all its individuality. Consequently, the species is much more precise than the genus because it more closely approaches individuality (*Cat.*, 5; 2 b 7-28).

A further reason why Aristotle preferred the particular may be found in the theory that the first substance is the final subject of our judgments. The scientific subject of judgment is, it is true, always a universal notion, as we have already seen; but after the universal is drawn from the particular, it is always the particular of which something is predicated or asserted. And for this reason the particular must represent being in its strict sense. Not only is something logical stated of the particular, but the predicates themselves exist in the particular. They are supported by it and have in it their being. And this offers a third reason for the view that the first substance is being in a preferred sense.

3) *First substance.* a) Its Notion. Supported by this, we can better explain what Aristotle means by the term "first substance" ( $\pi\rho\omega\tau\eta\,o\nu\sigma\iota\alpha$ ). "Substance, in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word, is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject; for instance, the individual man or horse" (*Cat.*, 5, 2 a 11; ed. McKeon, p. 9:  $\delta\,\tau\grave{\imath}s\,\ddot{\alpha}v\theta\rho\omega\pi\oslash$ ,  $\delta\,\tau\grave{\imath}s\,\ddot{\iota}\pi\pi\oslash$ ). First substance is therefore a  $\tau\grave{\o}\delta\epsilon\,\tau\iota$ , the ultimate subject of an assertion and

the ontological basis of accidents. By such a definition we can readily detect two ways which lead to the acceptance of first substance, the linguistic-logical and the ontological. The mind assumes both in its reasoning and in its speech, but more precisely in its judgments, a substratum of which an assertion is valid. Of it everything is predicated, but it is itself not a predicate. Chapter 5 of the *Categories* very clearly points to this relationship as the underlying reason which leads ultimately to the acceptance of substance. This enters formally into the definition. The mind performs its functions in this way, and for this reason substance is a form of thought for Aristotle. But being itself is correspondingly divided. In our experience we can distinguish being in a twofold way: a being which exists only when it is present in something else (*ens in alio*), accident; and a being of which this is not the case, which possesses its own existence (*ens in se*) and consequently forms a proper essential being, substance. If accidents are found in substance, substance is naturally also the "permanent" in contradistinction to the "transitory," the bearer and not the thing borne, the thinkable (*noumenon*) in contrast to appearance (*phenomenon*). In such a description nothing is said about the foundation and the origin of this state of autonomy. The *ens in se* need not be conceived, as it is in the modern philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza, also as an *ens a se*. This is an entirely different problem. It is not the examination of the basis which leads to the distinction between substance and accidents, but the examination of the existential form of a being. For Aristotle this is determined and fixed and is self-evident. Aristotle assumes that our speaking, as well as our thinking, since both permit us to presuppose a substratum, are thereby in accord with being and its structure. Mind and being correspond with one another. For this reason we mention the changes that take place in a subject, because they are actually in it. The ontological relation of these accidents differs from time to time, as we have already seen (p. 142 f.). The decisive element, however, is that the accidents show forth an inner relationship to the essence of the substance. As a consequence they enunciate this essence more or less clearly and immediately. For Aristotle the changes which we perceive in our experience and assert in our judgments are not present one after another irregularly and unrelatedly, so that they must be artificially united by special laws which are in reality foreign to their essence, namely, mere physical laws as Hume declares them to be. They are inwardly and ontologically bound together by the

substance in which they inhere, because they arise in it and because the substance determines by its essence the nature of whatever occurs in it. As a result, it is possible to reach a conclusion concerning the specific species of the substance through a consideration of its accidents.

*b) Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Ideas.* By his position with regard to first substance as being in its proper and primary meaning, Aristotle turned his back completely on Plato. In Plato the "really real," the *ōντως ὄν*, is present not in the particular but in the universal, in the species. And the more universal the *eidos* or form is, says Plato, the more real is its reality, the more actual its actuality; Aristotle's view is the exact opposite. In Aristotle, being derives its primary, therefore its truest, meaning from below, from the concrete; in Plato, from above, from the idea. It is precisely Plato's theory of ideas which Aristotle subjects to a thoroughgoing criticism.

He objects to it in the *Metaphysics* (I, 6 and XIII, 9): (1) Science depends on universal notions, notions which are always identical with themselves. In this Plato was correct. But from this it does not follow that the universal notions exist by themselves as ideas, as though they were proper substances. They exist not along with, but in, things, and only the mind brings them into the open, by grasping what is identical in the multiplicity of things. This universal in its pure form of universality is only a logical, not an ontological, image (*species*). (2) The idea implies a superfluous duplication of things. It is nothing else than what things already are. Why then should it be assumed? (3) Ideas do not explain what they should explain, namely, the essence of things, because they are not present in them. The notion of participation by means of which Plato sought to join together things and ideas is only a poetical figure and empty talk. (4) Specifically, ideas do not explain the source of motion. They are something static, not dynamic. Through the idea of a house, the house itself does not come into existence. (5) By the theory of ideas we ultimately reach a *regressus in infinitum*. Above the *eidos* or form and above things that participate in it stands still another idea that is a still loftier universal, e.g., above the idea of a man as such and the individual man we must postulate "a third man" (the argument of the third man), above this latter and its subordinates another still more sublime, and thus continuously, so that we can never arrive at any first idea.

*c) A New Notion of Reality.* Aristotle's criticism of Plato would

be annihilating, but only on one supposition, and this is precisely the problem. Aristotle assumes that individual things form a special reality, in fact, reality absolutely. As a consequence of this, the Platonic ideas are naturally a special world alongside this one. But Plato could have replied by saying: These individual things are not actually a special reality, and for this reason I do not duplicate the world. Individual things are what they are only by means of the idea. The idea does not exist alongside things; it appears in individual things, and only then is the phenomenon at all possible. There is not a double being, but only the being of the idea.

There is, however, one benefit which may be derived from this discussion; the new notion of reality which Aristotle propounds in opposition to his teacher. To him the individual thing is real and this individual thing is a thing of the senses; for the antithesis to the world of thought conceived by Plato is the visible world of Aristotle with its particular sensible objects. This position of Aristotle in opposition to Plato determined the notion of reality down the centuries up to the threshold of idealism propounded in modern times, and it is responsible for the fact that whenever reality is mentioned thought immediately turns to the things of nature, sensible things. Is not the soul something real? And are not logical assumptions and values more durable than brass (*aere perennius*)? By what right can we designate the sensible world as the only true reality? Aristotle never advances proof for this position; it was an assumption, a presentation of a viewpoint.

4) *Second substance*. But now we are going to be surprised. Aristotle does not rest content with his theory of first substance. To him the substance was the essence, the support and the basis of an entire complexus of phenomena. But now he forges ahead and poses the question: What makes the first substance that which it is? By this question he assumes an essence of the essence. Socrates as substance is the nucleus of all phenomena which are connected with him. But what is this substance of Socrates itself? The answer is: Socrates is a man. Socrates therefore is understood in this answer under the aspect of the universal, under a species. This universal, this "specific" character forms his essence; that is to say, it is responsible for "that which it is [for Socrates] to be" ( $\tauὸ τὶ ἦν εἶναι$ ), the essential. This is the second substance ( $\deltaευτέρα οὐσία$ ). And Aristotle assures us that it is in the order of nature an *a priori* and something better known ( $πρότερον τῇ φύσει καὶ γνωριμώτερον$ ), "naturally prior and better

known") (*Meta.*, VII, 3; V, 11; *Phys.*, I, 1; *Pr. An.*, I, 2). By venturing this the *eidos* (form) reappears. The universal is actually more important than the particular; for the particular is now understood only by means of the universal. We see in Aristotle the ontological priority of the universal very clearly, when in the *Topics* (IV, 4), he declares that he understands the species by means of something more universal, from the genus itself, and perceives in it also an apriority and something better known, "for annul the genus and differentia, and the species too is annulled, so that these are prior to the species" (*Top.*, VI, 141 b 28). Genus here is not a notion, but an ontological universal; for a universal notion does not annul its subordinate notions but itself arises from them. Only the Platonic *eidos* annuls what is subordinate to it; because everything that shares in it exists only through the *eidos*; and only if we look on the universal idea with Platonic eyes can the particular be annulled by the annulment of the more universal. Despite his polemics, Aristotle cannot rid himself of his Platonism. Just as in his theory of knowledge, so in his metaphysics he ultimately returned to Plato after an initial departure from him. In opposition to the theory of Plato, he introduced the first substance as being in its primary meaning, but he nevertheless permits the second substance to constitute the first. And in this respect he is again a Platonist.

5) *Form.* a) Meaning. With the notion of the second substance which forms the essence of the first, we arrive at one of the basic concepts of Aristotelian philosophy, namely, the notion of form (*μορφή*). Insofar as being is determined in its specific singularity by second substance, we can conceive of this *eidos* as form, naturally not in a visual but in a logico-ontological sense, as something determining, forming, bestowing being. As in his logic, so also in his metaphysics Aristotle takes the substrate (*ὑποκείμενα*) for granted. In logic the predicates adhere to and inhere in their substrates; in metaphysics, the forms—or, more precisely, the form determines the substrate to a definite essence. All beings are beings that have been "formed"; all becoming, the receiving of a form; all passing away, its loss. Matter stands naturally as correlative to form. Both are principles of a being.

b) Origin. The way by which Aristotle arrived at these two first principles of being and becoming was again by a consideration of speech and thought. The *Physics* (I, 7), where matter and form are developed for the first time, provides the foundation for this reflec-

tion: the fact that whenever we speak of becoming, we are accustomed to say that something will become this or that. It is not only in accidental change that we assume a substrate in our thought and speech, the substance from which the change proceeds and is educed. Substances themselves are presumed to arise, if they arise at all, from some basic underlying matter. We perceive that plants, animals, houses, and statues proceed from something, from seeds, wood, stone. And as a consequence, the thing that becomes is always a composite of matter and of form; and analytic reasoning can pick out these two principles, the formal and the material cause, and clearly present us with the notions of matter and form. What Aristotle offers us here is not a naïve transfer of popular observations in art and in nature to metaphysics, but an analysis of reasoning and of speech, hence of the human mind in its basic functions, the human mind which is accustomed to think in this manner of becoming and of being.

c) Hylemorphism. We term this matter-form metaphysics hylemorphism. It offers us one of the most enduring philosophical systems that has ever been devised. At its center stands Aristotle. His forerunners were the Pythagoreans and Plato, his successors Scholasticism and the Scholastics; even Kant continued to speak of matter and form in his theory of knowledge. The essential point of the whole theory is its tendency to include the whole of being in its examination and explanation. In it the whole is prior to the part. The parts exist because of the whole, not the whole because of the parts. All becoming, therefore, is regulated by the form. The form is not merely the end product, rather it determines from the outset the entire process of becoming. We always find the form at the core of all phenomena. The most extreme antithesis in this qualitative examination of being, as we are sometimes accustomed to call it, may be found in Democritus, for whom there exist only parts and completely mechanical groupings; or in Locke or Hume, for whom phenomena are likewise without inner legitimate connection and cohere only by means of psychic or mental associations, until Kant again introduced substance, but only as a category of reason, not as an essential structure of the ontological order. In the words of Aristotle, the whole of being is intrinsically co-ordinated; it has nuclei of crystallization, points of origin, life centers, structures, species, genus, degrees, in fact precisely our forms.

d) The Idea in the World. With this we are again confronted with the Platonic *eidos* as a metaphysical principle. Form plays the

same role in the philosophy of Aristotle as it had in Plato: it determines the quiddity (essence) both in the logical and the ontological order; it is being in its proper sense; it guides action and is consequently the reason for phenomena, entirely apart from the fact that in his works the form is called the *eidos* and occasionally also the *paradeigma*. In addition the Aristotelian forms are as eternal as the Platonic ideas. But to Aristotle the form is, as must be emphasized again and again, immanent to the body. The world is no longer in the idea, but the idea is now in the world. The form no longer appears in its universality, but in its concrete and particular realization. For Aristotle only the first substance, not the second as was the case with Plato, moves about in the world. And if the form becomes operative, this is due to its actuality both in space and in time. This, then, constitutes the difference between the Platonic and the Aristotelian *eidos*. (This is what we always hear.) But, on the contrary, the universal specific capacity, that is, the form that is always universal, is alone operative and alone confers actuality in space and in time. Although the universal may appear to be particular, the decisive element in the formation of being is always "the second substance," for "man begets man." How otherwise could the effect of the formal cause be everywhere the same? *Omne ens agit sibi simile*, maintain the Scholastics in their interpretation of Aristotle. The "similar" (*simile*) which here operates similarly is always the species, not the first substance as such.

e) The Platonic Element in Aristotelian Metaphysics. The Aristotelian form as a metaphysical principle is always the Platonic idea; otherwise it would have neither meaning nor force. How could it otherwise be prior by nature? For in the world of Aristotle, which is supposedly made up of space-time reality and subject to constant development, the form is always found at the end of a process of becoming. Only "by nature" or, as we sometimes say instead, "metaphysically" is the whole prior to its parts. How could this be possible, if not in the ontological form of the idea? How can matter desire form (*Phys.*, I, 9; 192 a 17-25), if only space-time genesis is considered as reality? Had Aristotle, like his master before him, that master who firmly believed that the whole sensible world seeks to imitate the idea, not recognized an ideological priority, then there would be nothing prior by nature; that is, there would be no metaphysical priority. To develop metaphysics as Aristotle understood it means simply to Platonize. Whether I say the world is in the idea or the

idea in the world, both mean exactly the same thing in the end. In the first instance the material world participates in the idea; in the second, the form is present in the material world and by its being determines the beings and phenomena of the material world (*agere sequitur esse*), so that ultimately that which a thing is, is what it is by virtue of the form. For Plato it is always the *ousia* which "saves phenomena." "There exists in the chief features of their philosophy such a surprising agreement between Aristotle and Plato," N. Hartmann pointed out, "that we can rightfully ask the question: 'where precisely does the unbridgeable chasm between them lie?'" That this accord and agreement are not sufficiently recognized is due, perhaps, to the constant polemic which Aristotle directed against his teacher. To one who looks beneath the surface, it is evident that his polemic frequently was only affected.

6) *Individuation*. The true character of the Aristotelian form appears again in connection with the problem of individuation. The form is always a universal, a second substance. How does the first substance, the particular, originate from it? asks Aristotle. He looks for the basis of individuation in matter. Since the form is imbedded in the material world of space and time, matter becomes concrete and particular, and thus there arise the countless exemplars which are classified in a species, the numerical one, in opposition to the specieslike oneness of the form. Matter is therefore the principle of individuation. Everything that exists in space and time is therefore a composite of matter and form: neither matter nor form exists for itself alone, but only the *Synolon* (*σύνολον*), the first substance which is composed of matter and form. There is only one pure form that exists for itself alone, without any admixture of matter, the Unmoved Mover. He is the *substantia separata*. All other beings are on the other hand only a compound (a mixture) and are therefore always particular. That Aristotle took the trouble to inquire how first substance can originate from second substance, since to his way of thinking the particular is primary and from it the universal is derived, shows us that in this matter his viewpoint has again changed. First reality is indeed only the universal; otherwise we would not need to formulate the problem of individuation at all. Again Platonism filters through.

7) *A divided Aristotle or a bipolarity of being*. Should we consider as a contradiction this fluctuating position of Aristotle in regard to the concept of the *ousia*? At one time he sees the essence in first

substance, at another in second, and at still another in the particular, and finally in the universal itself. Or should we in a purely historical fashion attempt to explain the whole matter as an unfinished controversy between Plato and himself? Actually we might embrace both these solutions, but we would not be doing justice to the subject if we did. Could not Aristotle point to a very realistic justification for his viewpoint? Is not reality determined partly by the particular and partly by the universal? Does not being possess a bipolar character, as it were? We can see this argument beautifully developed and exemplified in the human character. We try to understand a person by means of his temperament, either as sanguine or melancholic, etc. But we are never able successfully to reduce any one person to any one precise type; the person defies our analysis and always retains his individuality. Both are essential. And this is true in other branches as well; for even the schematized objects in the field of technics never represent a pure type; even in this highly specialized field the individual predominates. Does not every auto as well as every fountain pen have its own peculiarities of which every driver and every penman are conscious, despite the supposed make of the auto and the pen? Aristotle saw these two extremes of reality. They are genuine principles by which being as such can be explained more fully.

**Hyle or matter.** 1) *Second and first matter.* When we speak of the form, we must also mention the notion of matter ( $\nu\lambda\eta$ ). By means of the form alone, says Aristotle, no house can be built. The builder needs building material. A certain causality must therefore be ascribed to matter. And if we should take into consideration the fact that the durability of any material construction differs greatly according to the material used in its production, we would realize that being and becoming are dependent upon matter, and that the material cause constitutes an intrinsic principle.

Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of matter. He defines the first thus: "For my definition of matter is just this — the primary substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be without qualification" (*Phys.*, I, 9; 192 a 31; ed. McKeon, p. 235). The second type of matter is that which "in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined" (*Meta.*, VII, 3; 1029 a 20; ed. McKeon, p. 785). Matter in the first meaning can also be that which is already formed in some fashion or another: second matter ( $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\;\nu\lambda\eta$ ), for example, building material which is used for a house or for a statue. Only

matter in the second sense constitutes the principle which Aristotle opposes to the form: first matter (*πρώτη ὕλη*). The first matter is absolutely undetermined, indistinguishable; it is basic to all being and becoming; it is without any form but can be prepared (fashioned) to receive any form. Aristotelian matter is not restricted solely to the material world; it is not a notion which exclusively serves the aims of the natural sciences, but it is the correlative of the notion of form without which it would lose all meaning. The difficulties connected with the notion of first matter, which is without any determination, were fully realized by Aristotle. For this reason he expressed himself most cautiously; it must be conceived of by means of an analogy to that matter which the artist uses in his work (*Phys.*, I, 7; 191 a 8).

2) *Privation*. If we should examine matter specifically in regard to the point that in the course of change it loses its form only to receive another in place of the one lost, we would be able to perceive in such a deprivation of form (*απέρησις*) a third principle of becoming. Although this principle is notionally distinct from matter, it is really identical with it. For this reason, looking at a subject in a truly realistic fashion, we can distinguish between two principles, matter and form; considering the same subject notionally, however, we would have three: matter, privation, and form.

3) *Becoming*. By this distinction Aristotle believed that he had obviated the difficulty which philosophers had encountered in connection with the problem of becoming when they studied the works of the pre-Socratics, especially the Eleatics. They asked: How can something be derived from a being without clashing with the principle of contradiction: for a being is this being and therefore not another; it would be another, however, if it were to become something else. Much less can something come into existence out of non-being. We would be confronted with the same difficulty if we should take as basis the contradictories of being and becoming, as the Heracliteans had done. How do these contradictories react one upon the other? Aristotle resolved the rigid notion of being which actually recognized only the particular, the *τόδε τι*, and bridged over the contradictories by introducing matter which is a medium between being and non-being (cf. p. 176).

4) *Aristotelian matter and ancient philosophy*. On this matter of becoming as oftentimes on others, Aristotle associates himself with the philosophy of former ages. Pre-Socratic philosophy knew the *Apeiron* or the Boundless; only that philosophy presented it in a

more isolated form. Plato brought this principle into closer contact with individual beings. His matter becomes a receptacle or reception chamber for the form; it becomes the "nurse of becoming." But he accepted matter unwillingly and sought to deprive it of its rights as first born by giving it an idealistic derivation. In the philosophy of Aristotle, matter exists as a true principle along with the form, and to him it was as eternal as the form itself. We are made cognizant of its new importance especially by the fact that in his hands it becomes the principle of individuation.

We ask ourselves, of course, how can the "most formless" bring about a radical determination of something? That matter could so determine was assumed by the earlier schools. Heraclitus and Plato saw in space-and-time realities the "once," the solitary, "that which happens but once"; in ontological proximity to space-and-time reality stands, implicitly at least, Aristotelian matter, although it must be entirely undetermined.

**"The beginning of motion."** Aristotle appears to have found his true self with the introduction of his principle of movement, the so-called efficient cause. He objected to Plato: "Nothing, then, is gained even if we suppose eternal substances, as the believers in the Forms do, unless there is to be in them some principle which can cause change . . . for if it is not to *act*, then there will be no movement" (*Meta.*, XII, 6; 1071 b 14; ed. McKeon, p. 877).

1) *Purpose of the efficient cause.* In this assertion he clutches at an idea which we today call "the dynamic." According to this, Aristotle appears to conceive of the Platonic idea as something static and logical. If this is true, then it would appear as if Plato in his philosophy had not explained a large segment of reality, namely, becoming and movement. Aristotle sought to supply what he thought was lacking. But Plato had actually been aware of the reality of movement, as his Dialogue the *Sophist* proves. But his philosophical explanation of this reality by means of ideas was not successful in the eyes of Aristotle, because to him the idea was essentially different from dynamics, change, and movement. For this reason he searched for a cause which might explain this aspect of reality—and the result is his moving or efficient cause. What is essential to this cause?

2) *Species of becoming.* We approach the answer best when we take into consideration the various kinds of becoming which take place, or to put it even more generally, the various kinds of motion; for Aristotle subordinated the notion of becoming to the notion of

movement. The concept of change is, practically speaking, synonymous with that of movement. We may therefore distinguish a *quantitative* movement, which consists of increase and diminution, growth and decline (*αὔξησις καὶ φθίσις*); a *qualitative* movement, which is a transformation or a conversion (*ἀλλοίωσις*); and a spatial movement (*φορά*), which consists of a change of place. Characteristic of these three species is the fact that all take place *in* a subject. They are consequently of an accidental nature. Antithetical to these is substantial becoming, the generation and corruption of the subjects themselves (*γένεσις-φθορά*) (*generatio-corruptio*). What Aristotle saw in these various species of becoming was the change in the determination of the form. A thing has at one time this and at another that determination. For this reason he recognized three factors of becoming, namely, matter, form, and lack of form or privation (*στέρησις*). By such a concept he took into consideration actually only the beginning and the end of the process of becoming, not the actual becoming itself, the transition. Consequently, Aristotle did not advance beyond Plato, for the form becomes again something static and stationary. What is this transition, motion itself?

3) *The essence of motion.* We are told: "The fulfillment of what exists potentially, in so far as it exists potentially, is motion" (*Phys.*, III, 1; 201 a 10; ed. McKeon, p. 254). Becoming is fulfillment; becoming is actuality. When a statue is made of bronze, becoming is not verified in the bronze as bronze, for this remains bronze even in the statue itself; but it is verified in that which is potentially contained in the bronze. The essence of all becoming and of all motion lies in the actualizing of this potentiality. Becoming is accordingly explained by the notion of fulfillment, actuality.

4) *Principle of causality.* To explain motion Aristotle made use of an axiom basic to his philosophy, namely, the principle of causality: "Everything that moves is necessarily moved by something else." Aristotle considered this axiom self-evident. The proof advanced in the *Physics* (VII, 1) is actually directed against the teachings of Plato concerning immanent self-movement. This argument rests on the thought that even in those instances in which self-movement is mistakenly conceived to exist there are present a mover and a thing moved. Consequently, even in such instances the principle, "everything that moves must necessarily be moved by something else," holds good. This argument does not prove that causality must be present; it presupposes that it is. Aristotle would not have directed his proof

for this principle against self-causality, but against the lack of all causality.

Aristotle also recognized a still more general formulation of the principle of causality, and for him this formula was even more important. It runs as follows: "Actuality is prior to potency" (*Meta.*, IX, 8; 1049 b 5; ed. McKeon, p. 828). The actual is prior to the potential in thought, for we are able to conceive of a "possible" only on the supposition of the actual. "To be possible" means simply to be able to become actual. The actual is also prior to the potential in time; to be sure, the actual comes into existence only by means of a possible, but it does so only because the causality of something already actually present is exerted: a man comes into existence through an already actual man, a musician only through an actual musician in whom a first mover is active. "For from the potentially existing the actually existing is always produced by an actually existing thing, e.g., man from man, musician by musician" (*Meta.*, IX, 8; 1049 b 23; ed. McKeon, p. 829). A man is, consequently, prior to the seed from which he springs. Finally, the actual is by essence (*οὐσία*) prior to the potential. Even if the actual is chronologically posterior to the potential, it is prior in the order of the *eidos* and the *ousia*; the form of which it is an expression must already exist. All becoming tends toward an end insofar as it hastens toward the form. This end or purpose is nothing other than actuality itself. And actuality is nothing other than an effect, a completed, perfected being. For this reason the effected reality (*energeia*) is called *entelecheia*, i.e., that which has achieved its purpose. Actual sight is not present simply because the faculty of sight exists in a given individual, but the faculty is present for the sake of seeing. Reality or actuality precedes potentiality.

5) *The efficient cause as the formal cause.* Plato had already enunciated the principle of causality. "All motion results necessarily from a cause," as we read in the *Timaeus* (28 a). If Aristotle was of the opinion that motion and becoming could not be explained as transition and dynamics by means of the idea, and if in opposition to such a theory he appealed to efficient reality, it is incumbent upon us to learn how he explains actuality or reality.

He called it *energeia* or *entelecheia*, and distinguished between a "first" and an "imperfect" entelechy. The first is to him the perfect actuality of a being; the second, that which is in the process of becoming a reality. From this we would naturally expect that the

actuality or the entelechy which now appears as a new cause in opposition to Plato's conception would be explained by some entirely new factors. Much to our surprise, however, we discover that on this point Aristotle devoted himself to an elaboration of the notion of form. The entelechy is nothing more than the form. "The mover or agent will always be the vehicle of a form, either a 'this' or 'such,' which, when it acts, will be the source and the cause of the change, e.g., the full-formed man begets man from what is potentially man" (*Phys.*, III, 2; 202 a 9; ed. McKeon, p. 256). Aristotle here reduces the four causes which he had represented in *Physics* (II, 3) as separate and distinct to two, namely, to the material and formal causes. Even the efficient cause, which Aristotle had set up in opposition to the idea, is called a form (*Phys.*, II, 7; 198 a 21-b 9; ed. McKeon, p. 248).

Some might maintain that this view should be assigned to the Platonic period of Aristotle, for the texts cited are found among the known earlier portions of his *Physics*. Nevertheless we find the same view proposed in *Metaphysics* (IX, 8; 1049 b 27): "Everything that is produced is something produced from something and by something, and that [the latter is] the same in species [*eidos*] as it [the former]" (ed. McKeon, p. 829). Nor can we hold that the *eidos* of Aristotle, which here appears as the efficient cause, is an *eidos* or form which has become concrete and dynamic and that in this lies Aristotle's difference from Plato. It would be a serious error to reason in this fashion. The whole core of the argument between Plato and Aristotle centers around the nature of this reality, and yet we find that Aristotle, like Plato, conceives of it as form. This is but another instance of Platonism revealing itself in his thought. Aristotle had set out to uncover a new reality; but he was unable to conceive of it any differently than had Plato. He could not finish his undertaking. To him that which is dynamic is also a form. This is shown most sharply when in *Metaphysics* (XII, 8; 1074 a 35) he calls the First Mover, which is purest actuality, a first or primary *essence* ( $\tauὸ τὸ ἡνὸ εἶναι$ ).

6) *Potency and act.* By the fact that the form appears as reality or actuality (*ἐνέργεια, actus*), matter is given the meaning of potentiality (*δύναμις, potentia*). In opposition to the act as the determining and active principle, we have potency as the capacity to be informed and to be realized, in short, as the potential. "Actuality, then, is the existence of a thing not in the way which we express by 'potentially'; we say that potentially, for instance, a statue of Hermes is in the

block of wood and the half-line is in the whole, because it might be separated out, and we call even the man who is not studying a man of science, if he is capable of studying . . . and we must . . . be content to grasp the analogy, that it is as that which is building is to that which is capable of building, and the waking to the sleeping, and that which is seeing to that which has its eyes shut but has sight, and that which has been shaped out of matter to the matter, and that which has been wrought up to the unwrought" (*Meta.*, IX, 6; 1048 a 30; ed. McKeon, p. 826). Actuality has a twofold meaning: the imperfect (incomplete) and the perfect (complete), or the first *energeia* (*entelecheia*) — which we may understand as "actuality" — and "the actualized." In connection with potentiality we must also make a distinction: namely, *pure potency*, which is without any efficiency and therefore denotes absolute potency, corresponding to first matter; and *mixed potency*, which has received a definite actualization but is still capable of receiving further actualization — this corresponds to second matter.

Aristotle may have arrived at his understanding of the difference between act and potency — as we may conclude from the examples which he used to visualize these notions — from his observation of artistic creations, in which unformed matter appears over against the creative activity of the artist as if it were a world of potency, and also from organic nature, where the whole process of becoming is conceived as a never ending shuttling between natural dispositions and their perfection, between possibility and reality.

In any case he placed special emphasis on the fact that the potential ( $\tauὸ δυνάμει ὅν$ ) must be numbered among beings, and thereby defended himself against the Megarians, who recognized only reality (or actuality) as being but denied outright the possibility of potency. If we should wish to speak of potencies, we would discover, as they thought, that only actuality possessed them; the potential corresponds to the actual; the possible to the real. But to this Aristotle rejoined: then a person would be a builder only so long as he practiced his trade. If he should stop working for any reason, he would not be able to call himself a builder. But we ask ourselves the question: Would he actually have lost his skill? Would he have to learn it all over again when he resumed his trade? Would people who closed their eyes during the day become blind and lose their sight or their ability to see? And would things which we found to be sweet or experience as hot or cold retain these qualities only as long as we

were enjoying them? Before and afterward, not at all? This would lead us to conclude that Protagoras was right when he declared that there was no such thing as an objective being, but that so-called being was established solely on the basis of our own subjective, transitory, and immediately actual experiences. But no sane person could ever believe such absurdities, and so we would be forced to concede validity to that special form of being which we have just called potential being (*Meta.*, IX, 3). We cannot, opines Aristotle, define the notions of actual and potential being, because we are dealing with something that is entirely primary. But all one would need to do would be to analyze his own experiences when he described his reactions to sleeping and waking, complete and incomplete, natural dispositions and development, to realize what is meant by them (*Meta.*, IX, 6).

7) *The implications of the doctrine of act and potency.* a) For the Problem of Becoming. The notions of act and of potency are as characteristic of the philosophy of Aristotle as are matter and form. After developing them, he attempted to explain the meaning of becoming. If we should conceive of being according to the undetermined, rigid meaning of the Eleatics, we would find that becoming could not be explained, because things always remain what they are. We could never permit them to become something else, because otherwise we would run headlong into the principle of contradiction. If we should, however, make a distinction between actual and possible being, by such a distinction we would build a bridge from one to the other. Insofar as something is an actual being, it is identical with itself; but insofar as there are potencies contained in it, it can become something else (cf. p. 170). By this explanation Aristotle refuted both Eleaticism and Heraclitianism, a task to which Plato had devoted himself when he propounded his theory of the one and the many. In Plato's teaching the many hints at the other, the other is "contained" in the higher Idea (Form). The Aristotelian potency is a variation of the Platonic participation or *methexis*.

b) For the Problem of God. Here we touch upon the cardinal point of the entire Aristotelian metaphysics, namely, the notion of an Unmoved Mover. This notion received its final, conclusive proof from the philosophy of potency and act. On the basis of his own direct personal observations, Aristotle discovered that everywhere in the realm of being we can distinguish between a being in act ( $\epsilon\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\eta$   $\delta\nu$ ) and a being in potency ( $\delta\nu\nu\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota$   $\delta\nu$ ). At the same time

he found that potentiality and actuality are interwoven in the world which we perceive with our senses, because actuality contains potentiality and potentiality certain actualities. Just as he had worked out the notion of absolute potentiality and of first matter, so he now prepares the notion of the supreme reality — pure act. This conclusion regarding the idea of potentiality and actuality in absolute purity was his own happy inspiration, although the ascent from the imperfect to the perfect was a familiar practice derived from the Platonic theory of ideas. If we remember, moreover, that pure act is a pure form, i.e., an idea, we would then appreciate the source, both ideologically and historically, to which this Aristotelian philosophical axiom belongs. Where in the whole world is actuality an idea or an idea actuality? Naturally only in Platonism. Only because the form possessed for him its entire *élan vital* was Aristotle able to represent his matter-form philosophy also as a potency-act philosophy. It is extremely significant that for him (*Meta.*, IX, 8; 1050 b 6) that which is prior by nature in the most exact sense (*κυριός*) are those substances which are separated from all matter. "For eternal things are prior in substance to perishable things, and no eternal thing exists potentially" (ed. McKeon, p. 830). Because there is no matter in these substances, there is likewise nothing potential in them. And for this reason they are eternal. This is the purest Platonic heritage. In Plato that which is separated from matter, the pure essence, is the eternal and the prior by nature. The metaphysical elements in Aristotle are always Platonic. And for this reason "to cultivate metaphysics" in the meaning which Aristotle attaches to it denotes basically only "to Platonize." It is the understanding of Aristotle current in the nineteenth century which prevents us from seeing the actuality proposed by Aristotle with Greek eyes, that is, from the standpoint of form, because in that century, in conformity with the development of modern philosophy, the "real" world conceived as the world of sensible phenomena is chaotic and must be regulated by something alien to reality, namely, by the mind. In such a philosophy the logical is purely logical. To the ancients the soul of reality was the quiddity, the form. If behind all becoming there was for these ancients an efficient cause, this is the form, because becoming is nothing else than the tendency (desire) toward a form (*Phys.*, I, 9). And if behind the world there is a final cause which sets the process of becoming into motion, there is again a form, this time, however, a "first" form, toward which all things tend and which moves the world, as a "thing

beloved" ( $\omega\varsigma \ \epsilon\rho\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\sigma$ ). This word no longer connotes a contradiction in the Aristotelian system. Of becoming in miniature as well as of becoming in the world process, even of efficient causes, the same scheme holds true: becoming is a tendency (a desire) toward a form. Its outline can be found, however, in Plato: Everything seeks to be as the idea.

**Purpose.** The fourth principle which illuminates being is purpose ( $\tau\ddot{o} \ o\bar{v} \ \epsilon\nu\kappa\alpha$ , "that for the sake of which";  $\tau\acute{e}\lambda\sigma$ , "the end";  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$ , "the good"; *causa finalis* or *exemplaris*). We cannot understand the formations and the processes of being if we do not take into consideration their purpose. Purpose is therefore a true cause and principle.

1) *Purpose in nature.* We meet with purpose today most intimately in the plans of men. To man a plan is an idea, and nowhere can we show more clearly what idea and purpose mean than by analyzing the work of a man who plans. Aristotle clearly recognized that in *technē* or the order of artistic activity, purpose is truly native. But he was also convinced that purpose is native not only to art but also to nature; in fact, art conned it from nature. In this respect nature and art are not to be differentiated from one another. If a house should grow of its own accord by natural processes, the end product would be just as the workman would have constructed it; and if whatever nature caused would have in turn to be produced by art, nothing would be done save as nature would do it. We know purpose in nature best in animals and plants. Swallows, ants, and spiders do not pause to reflect. But their nests and their webs are so wonderfully contrived, so purposeful, that we must in all fairness ask ourselves whether or not the creatures had planned them beforehand. And when leaves grow in such a way as to protect the fruit that grows on the tree, and when roots burrow into the ground so as to be able to nourish the tree, we cannot overlook the finality thus displayed. In general, we can say that nature does nothing senselessly and purposelessly (*De Caelo*, II, 11; 291 b 13).

2) *Accident or purpose?* But could it not be possible that what appears to us as purposeful is only the product of chance? and whatever survived, precisely because it survived, has been preserved? In *Physics* (II, 8; 198 b 16), Aristotle formulates an extremely modern objection: Many things actually take place in nature very simply and they are necessarily attended by definite surrounding circumstances, without these being intended in any way as purposeful. If it rains,

wheat grows. In this instance the rainfall appears to be purposeful, but actually it did not rain because of the wheat but because masses of air became cooled. For a like reason the incisors and molars could have evolved as they did because they were best suited for the task of chewing and rending the food that must be eaten. But their evolution might also have been a matter of purest chance, and thus their form was preserved because it was practical and useful, for whatever has survived has prevailed in the end.

Here we may believe that we can detect the Darwinian theory of selection. Aristotle, however, rejects such an idea, for chance can explain this or that in nature, but whatever is always and everywhere the same cannot be the result of chance or have taken place of itself. For such phenomena we must assume a special principle, namely purpose. In nature everything is always and everywhere uniformly regulated. There are of course monstrosities, but they are only exceptions, just as in art there are occasional blunders and mistakes, but such occurrences do not give us sound reasons for calling into question the law of purpose. Since in nature regularity is law, being cannot be fully understood without recourse to the principle of purpose or of end. For Aristotle "those things are natural which, by a continuous movement originated from an internal principle, arrive at some completion" (*Phys.*, II, 8; 199 b 15; ed. McKeon, p. 251). To this concept of nature is opposed the explanation of Democritus that nature consists of atoms which lounge about in empty space. Here we can sense immediately that in this Aristotelian theory an entirely different ideology is propounded. His position is midway between qualitative-ideological and the quantitative-mechanistic concept of being.

3) *The meaning of Aristotelian teleology.* The purpose of which Aristotle speaks is nothing more than essence, form, and idea. The principle at the basis of all becoming and of motion in nature is always an essence or form. According to this essence or form, the activity of things is determined. Later on *agere sequitur esse* (action is determined by being) will be the formula which the Scholastics will use to express this idea. Since for Aristotle all activity is formally directed to a purpose, this purpose, this end of activity, enters into the notion of being, the beginning of the activity itself. The purpose, therefore, coincides with the form; and since Aristotle equates the cause of motion with the formal cause, he also identifies the final cause with the form (*Phys.*, II, 7; 198 a 25). The essence or the

*physis* of particular things is thereby always "to have become something for something," *πεφυκέναι τινί* (*Phys.*, II, 8; 199 a 8-12). For this reason he also termed the essence of an actual being an entelechy: "The action is the end, and the actuality is the action. And so even the *word* 'actuality' is derived from action, and points to the complete reality" (*Meta.*, IX, 8; 1050 a 21; ed. McKeon, p. 830). To have purpose and end in oneself means to be perfect. In contrast to modern philosophy in which teleological problems cannot master the question: How may we assume that *A* belongs necessarily and purposively to *B*, e.g., an insect to a flower? Aristotle saw that an essence always includes another being in the ontological order. And since this must also be understood in his *Physics* and thus constantly, all beings cohere inwardly, essentially, and purposefully. "Generation is a process from something to a something; that which is generated having a cause in which it originates and a cause in which it ends. The originating cause is the primary efficient cause, which is something already endowed with tangible existence, while the final cause is some definite form or similar end" (*De Part. Anim.*, II, 1; 646 a 30; ed. McKeon, p. 659).

In such a concept there is no question of the origin of a species from an actual becoming that originated in chance. Everything is formed by essences and becoming is the result of an essence, not the essence the result of the becoming. Aristotle explained that the primary origin of being was form and natural disposition (*Phys.*, II, 8; 199 b), and turns in *Metaphysics*, XII, 7 (1072 b 30) against the Pythagoreans and Speusippus for whom "the perfect" stands at the end and not at the beginning of the process of evolution. It is true that a human being is at the end of a developmental process from seed to maturity, but the seed itself originates from an already perfected being, so that man is accordingly prior to the seed. Since Aristotle holds that the world is eternal, he can venture such a statement, and it is a pointed refutation of a mechanical development of species and a most lucid confession of an idealistic morphology. "Idealistic," for the decisive element is the form or the idea. Although this form is an actualized form and operates in an extended, quantified reality, it is nevertheless naturally prior, *πρότερον τῇ φύσει* (1050 a 4-23).

In contrast to an infinite series, there can only be an ideal priority, and only then can the explanation that man is prior to the seed have any meaning. But here again we must approach Aristotle through Plato. We are able to recognize the Platonic, idealistic character of

the Aristotelian notion of teleology clearest in the fact that in the *Physics* (II, 9; 200 a 3 ff.) the final cause is stressed as more important than matter, that the purpose leads us back to a rational soul, "as it also does in art," and that Aristotle even plays with the notion of permitting *hyle* (matter) to be absorbed by the Logos. As he reflects upon it, in the case of a tool, its precise being (*quiddity*) was determined by the matter from which it was made; a saw, for instance, can be made only of iron, for this is required by the notion of a saw. Consequently there is not always the same matter which is correlative to the form as something entirely autonomous. Perhaps the form is the principle which determines everything, if everything is a precise being of such and such a kind. There is indeed a "co-cause" (*συναίτιον*), "matter," which is at odds with the soul and its purposive regulations, "the necessary" of which Plato himself speaks. But Aristotle asks himself: Cannot this "necessary" and this "matter" be conceived as a part of the Logos? Then there would be no logical amorphous or formless material. And the undeterminateness which is usually called matter would simply be a logical determination that had not been drawn out to its ultimate perfection.

Aristotle, however, only mulled over these thoughts. He held fast to matter, as did Plato. But insofar as he made an attempt, as had Plato, to understand it from the standpoint of the idea, we can appreciate his affinity to his master. Aristotelian teleology consequently has meaning and force only insofar as it offers superempirical notions of essence, be they known apriori or by intuitions of essence. The entelechy of Aristotle is not a psychic or biological emergent, but idea and form.

### 3. SPECIAL METAPHYSICS

The general ontological problematics of Aristotle may be condensed into three special metaphysical problems, into the questions concerning the soul, the world, and God.

**The Soul.** The work which Aristotle wrote on the soul treats not only of the phenomena of consciousness as do the modern psychologies, but of life in general, in its source and its essential characteristics; for according to the ancient philosophers, to have a soul meant to possess life. In connection with life he treats of sensation, phantasy and memory, reason and speculation, tendency and will—subjects which are of interest to modern psychologists because the world of consciousness is concomitant with life. What Aristotle's

views were concerning feelings and emotions we may discover in his *Rhetic*.

1) *Essence of the soul.* What is the soul? Viewed from the aspect of phenomena, it is defined as that which moves itself—a definition which Plato had already advanced. The soul determines the life of men, animals, and plants; life, however, is self-movement and as a consequence the soul is essentially self-movement.

a) The Soul as Self-Movement. But living beings do not possess absolute self-movement. It only appears as if they moved themselves spontaneously. In reality their movement is initiated by their environment which affords them nourishment and consequently makes possible respiration and growth as well as sense perception and innate tendency, from which the local movement of the entire living being results—local movement which permits us to speak of self-movement. Since the supplying of nourishment is inserted as a part of nature into the process of motion proper to the world and insofar as this is dependent upon other “first movers,” it is evident that the soul which makes creatures living beings cannot be termed self-moving in the strict sense, but only in a relative sense. There is actually only one Self-Mover who is neither *per se* nor *per accidens* moved by something else, the first Unmoved Mover,  $\pi\rho\tilde{\omega}\tau\sigma\tau\eta\kappa\eta\eta\tau\sigma\tau$  (*Phys.*, VIII, 6; 259 a 20—b 31 and 2; 253 a 7—21).

b) The Soul as Entelechy of the Body. Viewed metaphysically we learn that the soul “is the first grade of actuality [entelechy] of a natural organized body” (*De An.*, II, 1; 412 b 4; ed. McKeon, p. 555). What soul is designated by this definition will be discussed immediately. First of all, it is clear from the definition that hylemorphism again asserts itself: the soul is the form of the body. The philosophical as well as the biological significance of this concept may be found in the teleology presupposed by it. Entelechy for Aristotle means “to be completed”: it signifies “to have reached a goal” or “to have achieved a purpose.” And this is the case when reality has reached that stage where it corresponds to the idea by which its purpose has been established. The soul therefore denotes the idea and the whole; it denotes the structural unity of meaning and purpose in a living body. For this reason Aristotle explains that the body exists because of the soul (*De Part. An.*, I, 5; 645 b 14 ff.); that is, everything inhering in it is present because of the whole, everything is directed to an end or purpose just as in the case of a tool ( $\delta\rho\gamma\alpha\sigma\tau\sigma\tau$ ). By this explanation we arrive at the primary meaning of the notion, organic.

In this question we must be careful to take two things into consideration. First, entelechy is not a physical or biological emergent but an idea; it is called significantly *logos* or "that which it is to be" ( $\tauὸ τὶ ἦν εἶναι$ ) and the *eidos* or form of an organic body in *De Anima* (412 b 10 and 414 a 13). Second, we may not overlook the fact that for us moderns the content of such an idea is not as crystallized as it was for Aristotle, for whom the forms were precisely, as the ideas were for Plato, structural unities of meaning, "substances." For Greek and in general for all ancient speculation "forms" were taken as a matter of course. Philosophers today explain their bases of knowledge by the notions of the a priori and of intuition. In antiquity it was never questioned that these forms were identical with themselves, whereas in modern times this has become a problem: How can that which we join to a spiritual content in our notions and sense perceptions actually belong to it intrinsically? For this reason it was not difficult for the ancients to understand what man is, what an animal is, and what a plant is. For the modern man the world is broken up into atoms and sense perceptions, and on the basis of experience he must weld together a whole from this conglomeration of parts. And in this process experience always indicates only actualities but never necessities. In such a concept the soul is only a bundle of varied contents and we do not know why they must be joined together. For Aristotle the soul is a form, is purposive and a whole, namely, the totality of the body. And precisely through this meaningful whole the "living" body becomes what it is. This is the essence of life.

c) Development of Aristotelian Psychology. Aristotle arrived at the concept of the soul as the form of the body only late in life. It is found fully developed in *De Anima*. In the dialogues of his youthful years he advocated Platonic dualism. Body and soul are related to one another as two separate and hostile substances. They are bound together only extrinsically. Later, body and soul were no longer considered as strangers but co-operative; however, they were still held to be independent beings. Much later the soul becomes that vital energy which has its seat somewhere in the body. In his *Physics* he still supports this viewpoint. In the eighth book we read that creatures are not genuine self-movers, for in them we can distinguish something being moved and that which is doing the moving, just as a ship and its passengers do not constitute a physical unit but in them the thing doing the moving is always differentiated from the

beings being moved (VIII, 4; 254 b 28-33). This is the example which occasionalism later used to illustrate its dualism in connection with soul and body. Only in *De Anima* does this dualism disappear and body and soul blend into a substantial union. The soul is a totality in the whole body and man is a unitary substance, composed of body and soul.

2) *Different kinds of souls*: a) Plant Souls; b) Animal Souls; c) Human Souls. Analogously to the Platonic theory of the tripartite soul, Aristotle distinguishes between a *vegetative*, *sensory*, and *spiritual* soul. The vegetative soul denotes that reality which is endowed with the capacity for growth, nourishment, and reproduction and is found in its purest form and most fully complete in the plant world. The *sensory* soul includes the faculties of the vegetative soul and in addition represents still another reality in which there are sense perception, sense appetite, and local movement; this reality appears for the first time in the animal kingdom. It is this lower soul of growth and sensitivity in which Aristotle perceives, as did Plato before him (*Timaeus*, 77 b), the entelechy of a creature as such, even among men (*De Part. An.*, I, 1; 641 a 17-b 10). Only man has a *spiritual* soul in addition to these lower powers of growth and sensitivity. This makes him a man, a rational animal. Whenever Aristotle speaks of the soul of man, he oftentimes makes no further distinction and so we can understand both kinds, the inferior as life-principle and the superior spiritual soul. In general, for Aristotle the soul of man includes both orders, wherein the spiritual has first place.

What Aristotle expounded on these themes has become the common heritage of Western speculation both in regard to the soul and to man. According to Aristotle, man has the power of acquiring sense knowledge, which is divided into the five faculties or potencies (*δυνάμεις, potentiae animae*), namely, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, and hence five senses, which popular psychology has retained down to our day. The data of the senses are joined together and brought to our consciousness by the common sense (*sensus communis*), which is supposed to have its seat in the heart and is known to us moderns as "consciousness." The content of consciousness, emanating from the common sense, does not disappear with the cessation of the sensory stimuli, but persists. And in this the phantasm consists, that is, the representation (*phantasm*), "a remnant of an actual sense perception," and also the memory, if the phantasms or representations are retained in great numbers. Sense perceptions, com-

mon sense, phantasy, and memory are also possessed by animals. In men, however, these faculties of the soul denote only an inferior power or potency of knowing and inferior knowledge. Above and beyond this there is the spirit (*logos*), which is the superior and specifically human capacity for knowledge; under the aspect of discursive reasoning and judgment it is called "understanding" (*dianoia*), and under the aspect of intuition of ideas and principles it is known as "reason" (*nous*). Of itself the mind can fashion representations and in so doing unfolds a creative activity in contradistinction to which the phantasms offer only the material and are not truly efficient causes. For this reason the philosophers of subsequent ages speak of an active or agent intellect (*νοῦς ποιητικός*, *intellectus agens*). In such a view the *Nous* is "eternal, divine, uncaused, immortal, unmixed, passionless, pure energy." Insofar as the data of sense perception and the notions of pure speculation and contemplation are impressed upon the mind, which at the outset is a *tabula rasa*, it becomes capable of suffering, of being acted upon; hence it is called the "passive intellect" (*νοῦς παθητικός*) and is thus mortal.

Alongside this rational side of the soul-life, Aristotle recognized an irrational side. Especially did he acknowledge, and in this respect he offered something extremely novel, something that had escaped Plato, a psychology of desire (*ὄρεξις*). This faculty is divided into an inferior and superior desire (yearning, longing). The former is present in the natural instinct (*φύσις*), in the yearning (*ἐπιθυμία*) for food and sexual activity, as well as in anger or wrath (*θυμός*) within us which is known to us as ambition, courage, pugnaciousness, spirit of revenge, rebellion, contempt, urge to freedom, self-assertion, and fondness for power. All this is true also of animals. There is, however, a higher faculty of conation or appetitive tendency and this is possessed solely by man. This higher conation coincides with the will (*βούλευσις*), which is enlightened by reason. Presupposition for all striving, whether of the higher or the lower faculty, is always a good that is desirable to us or appears to be. By nature man seeks after pleasure and flees from sadness. The valuable and the valueless constitute, as a consequence, motives of action. Man in his will-life basically possesses freedom of choice (*προαιρεσίς*); in reality, however, many circumstances exercise an influence over his will, circumstances which more or less restrict this freedom. This is especially true of the affections or emotions (*πάθη*), such as anger, hatred, fear, shame, compassion, indignation, envy. They always have as

concomitants either happiness or sadness, and this advances or delimits the freedom of the human will (*Rhet.*, II, 1-17). Thus, in his psychology, we can readily see that Aristotle accorded to the irrational factors a greater prominence than had Plato.

3) *Unity of the soul.* After Aristotle had treated of a vegetative, sensitive, and rational soul, we can very appropriately ask whether, in his opinion, man possessed a unitary soul. Looked at from the standpoint of concept, we can, it is true, distinguish between various faculties of the soul. Aristotle asks (*De An.*, II, 2; 413 b 17; ed. McKeon, p. 558): "Is each of these a soul or a part of a soul? And, if a part, a part in what sense? A part merely distinguishable by definition or a part distinct in local situation as well? Just as in the case of plants which when divided are observed to continue to live though removed to a distance from one another (thus showing that in *their* case the soul of each individual plant before division was actually one, potentially many), so we notice a similar result in other varieties of the soul, i.e., in insects which have been cut in two; each of the segments possesses both sensation and local movement." He held, however, that men possess a unity of soul and polemized against Plato, for whom the various parts of the soul were apparently really separate and distinct. To Aristotle, however, reason and intellectual power, hence the spiritual soul, are also "separable." He speaks, nevertheless, of one human soul by means of which "we live, perceive, and think" (*De An.*, II, 2; 414 a 12; ed. McKeon, p. 559). Is this soul truly one, and if so, how in man are the inferior souls related to the superior? Are these other souls only potencies or faculties, which are sublimated in the higher or superior soul? How can the spiritual soul, which is capable of separation just as the eternal is from the temporal, be conceived as the form of the body, if that soul, which is the form of the body, is not supposed to be capable of such a separation but represents a specific determination of the body as we are expressly assured? (414 a 18-22.)

4) *Origin and persistence of the soul.* These difficulties are raised just as soon as we consider the origin of the soul and meditate upon its survival after death. According to Aristotle, the inferior soul is transferred by the father to the child at conception (*Generationism*), whereas the active (agent) intellect enters from without, "through the door" and is of divine origin (*De Gen. Animal.*, II, 3; 736 b 27). This does not take place by means of a cosmic cataclysm, as Klages held the spirit or mind to have originated in the world, using this

passage as his starting point; rather, Aristotle tries to explain that the spiritual soul is essentially supersensory and so cannot proceed from sensory material, for example, by way of evolution.

The spiritual soul was not created, but it pre-existed. In no way does it cease at death, whereas the sensitive soul dies with the body. In this we can detect another element of Platonism that Aristotle adopted and made his own. It is the Platonic soul that he is considering: an immaterial, intellectual being linked to eternal Truth and to the spirit, a being that originated among the gods and by which one returns to them. If the sensory soul and also the passive intellect are able to die, they must truly possess a certain degree of independence. Or should we understand by this discussion of the mortality of these souls that in the spiritual soul, at the death of the body, those lower functions that had been elevated by it and were referred to the body entirely disappear because there no longer remains any occasion to exercise them? In any case, we must bear in mind that Aristotle holds to an immortal soul because in his philosophy the spiritual soul still expressed a dualism that is Platonic. Of himself Aristotle never developed any special proof for the immortality of the soul. If we should wish to understand his immortality of the spiritual soul as an individual immortality and not simply as the timelessness of an objective spirit obligatory for men, somewhat in the meaning of the transcendental apperception of Kant, we would need to have his thoughts concerning the soul more fully developed. It is not by blind chance that Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroës took for granted a single active (agent) intellect, in which all men shared, nor was it by blind chance that later on among the Peripatetics the immortality of the soul was occasionally denied (Strato of Lampsacus). The former dealt with the logical soul, the latter with the soul as the principle of life. Aristotle was open to both interpretations.

**The world.** 1) *Aristotle's concept of the world.* The world is the place of motion. All movement, even qualitative, is in the last analysis spatial motion (movement in place). Contact in the sense of mechanical pressure or impact is presupposed for every motion. To this extent Aristotle reasoned in a mechanistic fashion. But he also knew of a qualitative and eidetical concept of motion. He recognized motion toward a connatural place: the fire strains upward; the earth, downward. This motion is rooted in the form of things and therefore is of their qualities.

By such an explanation Aristotle adopted a view which was contrary to Democritus, whose theory of the atom obliterated all qualitative distinctions and for whom differentiation in the world was made possible and actually effected solely by quantitative factors. Aristotle recognized four elements: water, fire, air, and earth. They are themselves qualities and their intermingling generates ever new qualities. In this qualitative *eidos* we should seek the essence of things; not in some kind of quantitative association. To these we must add as fifth element, ether (*quinta essentia*), of which are composed the constellations which are imperishable because the materials of which they are made encompass no contradictions; and they know only ideal motion, namely, eternally circular motion.

In consideration of the perishability and imperishability of matter, the world is divided fundamentally into two halves, namely, the world beneath the moon (sublunar world) upon which we live, and the world above the moon (superlunar world), the so-called hereafter—this is the world of the eternal stars. There is but one world, because everything in motion depends upon the great Unmoved Mover; and this world is round in form. In its middle there is the earth, which is conceived to be resting. This world is enclosed by fifty-six concentric spheres which revolve uniformly upon an axis. This number was arrived at by a calculation worked out by contemporary astronomy taught by Plato, Eudoxos, and especially Calippus, who sought to explain the motion of the seven planets whose orbits around the world should be a component derived from the interplay of the motions of the various spheres. Farthest removed was the sphere of the fixed stars, the so-called first heaven. This was moved directly by the First Unmoved Mover. The first heaven imparted its motion to the inner spheres, since the outer spheres were related to the inner as form to matter. In order to do away with the absolute, uniform motion that was demanded by such a concept and to make room for the individual motion of the single spheres and their stars, Aristotle later adopted a multiplicity of unmoved movers, "the spirits of the spheres," essences subsisting for themselves, "separated substances"—but all this not in any absolute sense. For in those later years, too, Aristotle assumed only one First Unmoved Mover, who is Himself unmoved and absolute and upon whom consequently these other movers are in a fashion dependent. By this device the unity of the world was preserved intact.

By his geocentric concept of the world which was also the concept

of the Middle Ages, Aristotle hindered the development of the modern concept of the world. For this reason philosophers have severely criticized him. But on the other hand we must not overlook the fact that precisely by such a concept he performed a yeoman's service for empirical natural philosophy. He is a zoologist, botanist, and anatomist and also manifested extensive biological interests: systematically, morphologically, physiologically, ecologically, chorologically. In these he had at his disposal an astonishing abundance of detailed knowledge, even though it is occasionally marred by singular views. To one who is narrow, Aristotle may well act as a brake upon development; the genuine Aristotle acts as a primary stimulant for ever new advances in the investigation of nature. As Charles Darwin said, "In accordance with the quotations which I had read, I possessed a deep appreciation of Aristotle's achievements. But I had not the slightest notion of what an astonishing individual he was. Linné and Cuvier had been my two gods, although each in his own way and in his own personal manner. In comparison, however, to the aged Aristotle, they were indeed veritable tyros." But these things should be incorporated into an encyclopedia of the various special sciences. The ideas of Aristotle of purely philosophical interest are those on place and time, on the eternity of the world, and on the question of its finiteness.

2) *The eternity of the world.* To Aristotle the world is eternal not only in its matter, as the pre-Socratics had always assumed, but also in its forms, consequently also in its present forms. Birth and death affect only individual beings. Species, on the contrary, are eternal. For Aristotle, the problem of the origin of species (descent) did not exist. There have always been human beings, although there have been times when great numbers have been annihilated by great catastrophes. The *eidos*, man, has never disappeared, just as matter and form are eternal. Patently a Platonic theory! Aristotle, nevertheless, carried on an active polemic against Plato, because Plato had assumed a beginning of the world in time. For Aristotle, the eternity of the world was evident not only in its matter and form, but also and especially in the eternal stars, as well as in the eternity of motion (*Phys.*, VIII, 1). If at some time motion had received an initial impulse, this would have been possible only by means of some other motion, a motion that had preceded this beginning. This, in turn, would have been brought about by another, and thus continuously, until we arrived at a First Mover, who is self-caused, pure

actuality, and who must be continuously in motion. In similar fashion we cannot maintain that there will be an end to motion, for a halt would have to be caused by another reality which itself had outlasted the previous motion. The world, as a consequence, is eternal—eternal, not indeed in the sense of timelessness, but in the sense of unlimited, unmeasurable time. Absolute eternity, however, is also for Aristotle timelessness.

3) *Place*. Place (*Phys.*, IV, 7 and 8) is not commensurate with matter, as Plato held, and also not with the form of individual bodies or with their distance from one another. Place is “the boundary of the containing body at which it is in contact with the contained body” (*Phys.*, IV, 4; 212 a 6; ed. McKeon, p. 277). Aristotle thought of all bodies as being contained by other bodies and thus we have location (an individual place). The world as a whole is also contained within boundaries by the firmament, and so we have place in general. Consequently there is no such thing as an empty place, as he shows in various arguments directed against Democritus. Place is conceived very realistically: everything is occupied by bodies. There is no such thing as vacant intermediate spaces or places. Only insofar as we remove a contained body from the one containing it, purely circumspectively, prescinding the while from its content, do we meet up with a new state or circumstance which we call place. Place is thereby rendered stable, and only thus can we know of an above and a below. Movement is possible only on such a condition, because only in such a way is contact at all possible. In an empty place everything would be scattered haphazardly and would move itself elsewhere and everywhere. Outside the world, which contains all bodies and beyond which there is nothing, there is consequently no place. Only within the world are bodies in place. The world itself and as the universe is not in a place.

Much more than metaphysics proper has this realistic concept of place and of bodies, advanced by Aristotle, and couched in popular phrases, struck the realistic note by which the Middle Ages knew him and for which modern times assailed him.

4) *Time*. Time (*Phys.*, IV, 10 and 11) is similarly conceived realistically. For Aristotle time is “the number [the measure] of movement in respect of the before and after” (*Phys.*, IV, 11; 220 a 24; ed. McKeon, p. 293). Without motion there could be no time; only by passing over the individual stadia of motion can we arrive at the concept of a before and after. The soul perceives this motion in itself,

in its own life, even if we should experience no corporeal influence from the world without. Time remains, nevertheless, inherently bound up with the material world. Outside our world there is consequently no time, just as there can be no waste time. The unit of measurement in time is the "now," the present moment. This moment is something mysterious, because on the one hand it divides the past from the present, and on the other, it joins them together. By its divisive action we arrive at the differentiation in time; by its unitive action in the present we establish its continuity. That time is endless has already been stated. It must be endless, because every moment, if it is to be conceived as true time, must always have time following it as well as time preceding it; thus time can never be said to have an end.

5) *The Limitless (Boundless).* The world, nevertheless, is not infinite. Aristotle drew from the pre-Socratics the notion of the undetermined or boundless ( $\alpha\piειρον$ ). But he did not conceive of it as something substantial, as these philosophers had done, but only as a property. In this sense it is inconceivable that anything be infinite. To his way of thinking, bodies have flat surfaces and hence also boundaries. In like fashion, the notion of numbers denotes something that can be counted to the end. What can thus be counted is not infinite. How can a body, furthermore—and the world as a whole is a body—be able to exist in an infinite place? In this respect there is neither an above nor a below, neither a right nor a left, neither a center nor a circumference, because here no place exists. The notion of indeterminateness signifies, in particular, something incomplete, and for this reason means the unfinished and the unformed for Aristotle. Because the form is the cornerstone of his metaphysics, the world cannot be infinite. Since he was confronted by the concept of time with something unlimited, and likewise with the infinite divisibility of physical quantity as well as with the limitless multiplication of numbers, he decided in favor of the following explanation: The unbounded, the limitless, may be found only in the realm of the possible, not in the realm of the actual; it is something that is in the state of becoming, and not something that is already perfected.

This statement may be reconciled with the last two facts that he advanced (the infinite divisibility of physical quantity and the limitless multiplication of numbers), but not with his doctrine of unlimited time. An actual infinite being may be found only in the realm of

the spiritual. Aristotle was thinking of his Unmoved Mover, who is infinite in being and in life, in causality and power.

**God. 1) The existence of God.** The first truth which Aristotle established concerning God was the fact that He exists. He reached this conclusion because he reasoned out the problem of motion logically. Since his day his proof, based on the idea of motion, has occupied the first place among the various proofs or ways (*viae*) by which we today demonstrate the existence of God.

The train of thought which Aristotle (*Phys.*, VII 1; VIII, 5 and 6; *Meta.*, XII, 6) developed is the following: If everything that is in motion requires that it be moved by something else, and this again by still something else, this may be accomplished in either of two ways: the last mover in any series of movements must again be moved by something else, and this in turn by something else, and thus indefinitely; or this last is no longer moved by something else, and so we arrive at the "first mover." We must assume a First Unmoved Mover of this kind (*πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον*), even though everything else is again moved by something else; for we cannot regress into infinity in a series of things in which one is dependent upon another, precisely because, if we should take for granted the possibility of such an infinite regress, we would soon conclude that such a thing as a first (unmoved mover) did not exist. If we must logically reject this *regressus in infinitum* and must assume the existence of a first (unmoved mover), which is in motion without having been moved by something else, we must then admit that it moves itself. And thus we are brought face to face with something that exists of and by itself, something that is unmoved. This means, of course, something that is not dependent upon anything else either of itself or accidentally, and something that must be eternal and necessary. It is purest actuality, for it possesses no potentiality whatsoever within itself. If it did, it might possibly not be and would therefore not be necessary. In this way it is differentiated from those relative self-movers with which we are surrounded in living beings and also in the spirits of the spheres which are always in some fashion or another, if only accidentally, dependent upon one another. This ultimate and primary reality is pure subsistence.

For this reason Aristotle wages war against the Platonic concept of "self-movement." He distinguishes in it a double element: the thing moved and the moving principle. Consequently there is potentiality extant in it. On the contrary, he thought only of the pure,

original principle of pure actuality. As St. Thomas Aquinas has remarked in this connection, Plato also truly had in mind this same thing.

There are several leading ideas in this argumentative proof. At one time Aristotle bases his reflections on the principle of causality. All becoming is effected by a becoming that has already taken place through the agency of a cause. Or, formulated in still another way: whatever possesses actuality can be produced only by another actuality, because actuality is always prior to potentiality (see above, p. 172).

As a further basic idea, we find the firm conviction that an infinite regress is impossible, a thought to which Aristotle gave expression on several occasions. An infinite series of causes explains nothing, because such a series dispenses with the first cause. If that cause should not exist, then the dependent reality which rests upon so very many intermediate links would also disappear. "Since in an infinite series there is no first term, here there will be no first stage and therefore no following stage either" (*Phys.*, V, 2; 226 a 5; ed. McKeon, p. 304). Therefore we would be without the final proximate cause of the proximate effects of which we are so conscious in our own everyday life and experience. An infinite series such as Aristotle represents to himself could never be exhausted, and thus we could never arrive at the final or ultimate cause. Furthermore, it could not be exhausted in a limited amount of time—and here this would be the case—because the motion that has been inaugurated by a cause must slacken and eventually stop within a fixed amount of time, and with it the whole series of causes which are basic to it must be moved during the same period, since according to Aristotle cause and effect are always simultaneous (*Phys.*, VII, 1; 242 a 15-b 34).

Third, we must not forget that the First Unmoved Mover is "by nature prior." Nothing in time can naturally precede an eternal motion, as Aristotle assumes when he postulates causes—an idea that he expounded in his proof for the eternity of motion. Consequently the first cause of motion takes on the character of a reason. The *πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον* or First Unmoved Mover may not be looked upon as something which is mechanistically active, but as something which possesses being in the ideal or intellectual order, which is basic for whatever proceeds from it, just as is the Platonic hypothesis for those things which share in it. Otherwise there would be nothing prior by nature in reference to eternal motion.

The Aristotelian proof of motion is, in general, only an inflection

of Plato's dialectical way to God. To him as well as to Plato being is divided into contingent (dependent) and necessary (independent) being. To him as well as to Plato the absolute is far beyond all things "both in sublimity and power." Everything else is founded upon the absolute; all being and all becoming take place because the lower seeks to be like the higher. The Aristotelian God also moves the world, as the idea moves a thing, "as the beloved, the lover" as we shall soon hear; in fact the outer spheres are related to the inner as form is to matter, and matter, as Aristotle explains in his accustomed manner, as a true Platonist, "desires and yearns" for the form (*Phys.*, I, 9; 192 a 16 ff.; ed. McKeon, p. 235), and thereby receives motion.

2) *The nature of God.* The knowledge that there is a God leads us to a knowledge of what He is, if we develop the basic thoughts inherent in it (*Meta.*, XII, 7 and 8).

a) *Being.* According to Aristotle, three concepts are basic to the nature of God: God is being, He is a spirit, and He is life. To this we must add that He is absolutely perfect; there is only one God and He transcends the world. It is not possible to give expression to the being of God without first making a distinction, for being has a variety of meanings and can be predicated of that which is not God. For this reason this concept must be further refined. Being is true of God in a special manner and in a special sense. God does not have being. He is being and is *the* Being. This means: All being in this world has its source ultimately in God on the basis of causality, as Aristotle proved in his argument for the existence of God. Being (in creatures) is in its essence contingent, mixed with potentiality, and consequently requires something prior to it in order to become actual, and this again something else, and so endlessly until we finally arrive at the notion of a Being—if we should not wish to leave the whole matter hanging in mid-air—which has the reason of its being in itself. This being is pure actuality without potentiality and for this reason has always existed and is therefore necessary.

In such a concept the nature of God consists of actuality (*ἐνέργεια, actus purus*), aseity, eternity, and necessity. "On such a principle . . . depend the heavens and the world of nature" (*Meta.*, 1072 b 13; ed. McKeon, p. 880; cf. also *De Caelo*, 279 a 28). Aristotle conceives of the nature of God as a pure form (*τὸ τι ἦν εἶναι πρῶτον*; 1074 a 35: "But the primary essence has not matter"; ed. McKeon, p. 884). This thought is understandable because all becoming denotes for Aristotle a

becoming of form, and the efficient cause is synonymous with the formal cause, so that the cause of all causes must also be the form of all forms. Through this it becomes evident how it is that God is *the* Being. He is the whole, because everything that exists has been caused by Him and in Him is preserved; and likewise it is clear that the notion of the First Unmoved Mover is in spirit a Platonic concept (Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 145). If his own train of thought does not prove this, then such terms as "first form" and "dependent upon the first principle" should recall the pyramid of ideas contained in Platonic dialectics, in which everything that is subordinate depends on the idea of ideas, and in which all forms have their culmination and from which they are again capable of being derived.

The oft-repeated assertion of Aristotle that the Unmoved Mover moves the world as the beloved the lover ( $\omega\varsigma \ \epsilon\rho\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\omega\varsigma$ ; 1072 b 3) is no contradiction and also no unfinished Platonic residue, but an authentic Platonism. To the metaphysician of hylemorphism all becoming and all motion have an eidetic and teleological meaning. Matter yearns for a form and seeks to become what this form is, just as for Plato everything yearns for the idea in which it shares. For Aristotle the supreme being is consequently also the Supreme Value, the *ens perfectissimum*. Because everything longs for this most perfect being, it sets the world in motion through love. The Aristotelian explanation of the world is not atomistic and mechanistic, but idealistic and spiritual. Thus Aristotle could, like Goethe, exclaim: "Let Eros rule, for it is he who sets in motion all creation," or as Dante has phrased it still more vividly: "And I reply: I in one God believe; — One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love — All heaven is moved, himself unmoved the while" (*The Divine Comedy*, III, 24; Carey translation, p. 442). All this is included in hylemorphism.

*b)* Spirit. If the nature of God is characterized by its actuality, its aseity, and its complete perfection, to it we must also attribute immateriality; for everything that is corporeal denotes materiality and along with it also possibility or potentiality. To the nature of God must furthermore be ascribed the attribute of spacelessness, for place and body mutually postulate one another. To the nature of God, finally, we must add unchangeableness or immutability, as well as timeless eternity; for that which is perfect cannot be augmented, and in it there can be no change and no becoming, and hence also no time, which is simply the measure of change (*De Caelo*, I, 9). When Aristotle searched for a reality in which all these attributes

could be visibly rooted, he could uncover only the Nous. This is also eternal, divine, impassable, beyond the transitoriness of this world. In this we can distinctly perceive the influence of Anaxagoras' teaching on the Nous and also the reflections of Plato on the ideal world, the *κόσμος νοητός*. For Aristotle God is a pure spirit and pure thought, indeed the "thought of thought itself" (*νόησις νοήσεως*), for how could that which is perfect think of anything besides itself? (*Meta.*, XII, 9.)

c) Life. God leads an eternally blissful life, "for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal" (*Meta.*, 1072 b 27; ed. McKeon, p. 880). To the ancients, spirit and life (soul) were not contradictions; on the contrary, if the soul or life is self-movement, then the spiritual, immaterial actuality is life in the fullest sense of the word: divine and immortal life for all eternity. That there is such a thing as a blessed existence is a truth derived from the perfection of God. Aristotle in a special way attempted to clarify this thought by means of an example: If to the human race the awakening and the first use of the senses and of the intellectual faculty are reckoned as pure bliss, how much more blissful is that Being who is actually purest and sublimest reason (*Meta.*, XII, 7). "O eternal light! — Sole in thyself that dwellest; and of thyself — Sole understood, past, present, and to come — Thou smilest on that circling, which in Thee — Seemed as reflected splendor" (*Divine Comedy*, III, 33; Carey translation, p. 482).

In the thoughts of Aristotle on the nature of God we perceive unmistakably the presence of Plato. Just as for Plato the idea of good in itself is the source of being and of life, so also for Aristotle life and being are contained in the Supreme Principle. Both likewise admit the presence of the spiritual in the nature of God; in this concept Plato thinks chiefly of the objective spirit, whereas Aristotle has the living spirit in mind. In his exposition of the nature of God, the Stagirite is more penetrating and more subtle. Whereas Plato is reluctant to formulate a direct proposition on the nature of his supreme principle, Aristotle declares forthwith and precisely: God is the most real being; He is a thinking spirit; and He is blissful life.

d) Personality and e) Transcendence of God. These last two notions might lead us to believe that Aristotle might possibly have held to the notion of a personal God. This is nonetheless not certain. There can be no doubt, however, that God is transcendent. He far

surpasses all creation both in might and sublimity, just as did Plato's concept of the good; for God is necessary in contrast to the contingent; independent, in contrast to the dependent; the creator, in contrast to His creatures. In relation to the world, God is something different but not entirely something else. In a similar fashion, the unity and the unicity of God become clarified. The divine principle must be one, because parts exist only in the realm of extended bodies. That there is only one God is deduced from the basic teleological structure of Aristotelian metaphysics according to which all being is directed to a supreme, final end. To assume that several principles of order exist, as Speusippus alleges, would lead us to conclude that there is no order whatsoever. But the uniform order discernible in the whole world is a matter of daily experience. The world is subordinate to uniform guidance, just as is an army. For this reason we speak constantly of a cosmos. And this must be so, for, as Aristotle quotes from Homer: "The rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be" (*Meta.*, XII, 10; 1076 a 4; ed. McKeon, p. 888).

# CHAPTER 9

## ARISTOTLE — III: ETHICS AND POLITICAL THEORY

### THE GOOD AND THE COMMUNITY

The importance of Aristotle in the field of ethics is as great as his significance in the fields of logic and metaphysics. Best known of his moral teachings are those which the mature, older Aristotle advanced in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The ethics of his early period, when he speculated after the fashion of Plato in a more metaphysical and otherworldly manner, is not so widely recognized. In the development of his ethical views Aristotle passed through several distinct stages, as we shall see in the following section.

#### 1. QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS

The first problem he raises is that of the principle of ethics. In what does the essence of the moral good consist? The answer he gives is the one usual for the Greeks: in eudaemonism, in happiness. This is the supreme good. Greek ethics was always the ethics of the good, at least in its terminology. This is, however, only a preliminary answer, for we must ask a further question: What is eudaemonism? What is happiness?

**Human nature in general is the moral principle.** Aristotle plunges into the problem, as was his custom, by examining and rejecting various opinions one by one (*Eth. Nic.*, I, 3-6). Thus, happiness cannot be found either in desire or in gratification; for this would be true also of animals, and our goodness would be nothing more than a feeling of comfort—in his hierarchy of values man would not be essentially superior to cattle. If happiness should consist in pleasure, we would be compelled to praise the oxen for being happy when they munched their fodder of peas, as Heraclitus had maintained. Even honor which promotes the esteem of others and yields success in public life cannot constitute eudaemonism; for if honor should

not depend entirely on the purely external assent of others, but should be rooted in the inward worth of an individual, man must be good in order to justify his claim to such an honor, and honor would accordingly not be the reason for happiness. On the contrary, our goodness is the reason for honor being given us.

As a consequence, Aristotle perceives that the essence of eudaemonism and hence the principle of the moral good is the perfect exercise of human nature: everything, especially every instrument, has its essence and its purpose. If it fulfills its purpose, it is good. And what is true of the instrument is true also of man. If a man does justice to his nature and to the duties inherent in it, and thus fulfills the purpose of his existence, we can say that he is both good and happy (*Eth. Nic.*, I, 6 and 9).

What constitutes the content of a universal nature, and what elevates man and what debases him, does not seem to have offered any special difficulty to Aristotle. In this respect a modern man would find himself beset by difficulties, for he does not seem to know whether or not man is an animal or essentially different from the animal kingdom, and this aside from the fact that in the modern world there is no unanimity concerning human moral values. Aristotle found himself in a much better position. He was not compelled to write a philosophical anthropology, because he could begin with the concept of man's ideal nature or *eidos*, as this had been taught by the Academy. The universal human nature that Aristotle held to be the principle of morality was not average human nature which, as a universal notion, can be abstracted from the experience of everyday life. For him the source of the moral principle is not purely empirical. The universal human nature which Aristotle expounded is ideal human nature. He analyzed its content and made it fruitful for morals by means of his doctrine on virtue. To be good and to be happy is to be virtuous. What Aristotle understood by virtues is what we term values today. His picture of man is fashioned from the table of values incorporated in his teaching on virtues. It was imperative for him to arrange such tables, if his ethical principle was not to remain a universal, meaningless formula. This he will attempt to do.

Aristotle is, nevertheless, no fanatic on the subject of virtue. The spiritual moral values form, it is true, the foundation of eudaemonism. If this eudaemonism is to be perfect, a whole body of material goods must be added to the inner qualities of man: noble birth, maturity and perfect conduct of life, assured means, relief from care, freedom

from every kind of menial work such as manual laborers and shopkeepers are called upon to perform, a recognized position in society, children and family, friends, health, beauty, an active social life, and a well-developed culture. And all these, the inward and outward values of eudaemonism, man must possess and put to work. He must, therefore, do more than just possess them. To Aristotle eudaemonism is *energeia*. And all this for an entire lifetime. That person is not truly good and perfectly happy who lives such a life only a short time, but only he to whom such a life has become a lasting and permanent state, for "one swallow does not make a summer."

**Hedonism?** The above sounds almost as if Aristotle were a hedonist. Actually Aristotle criticized Plato for his radical rejection of pleasure (*Eth. Nic.*, VII and X). When we speak of pleasure we must make a sharp distinction between pleasure in the sense of a desire for something (lust, concupiscence) and pleasure in the sense of happiness rejoicing over something. The pleasure to which Plato in general objects is pleasure in its first meaning, that has its source in displeasure, that is only becoming and has its purpose outside itself. Pleasure in the second meaning is something else again, namely, the obverse of natural activity. Everything that takes place naturally is not only beautiful but is also the cause of joy, and the more genuine and the more natural something is, so much more bliss does it cause. Pleasure is therefore concomitant with perfection, and the person who is morally the best will also be the happiest. For this reason pleasure does not come under the category of the indeterminate (*Apeiron*), but is essentially determined by the activity which is basic to it.

By this explanation Aristotle establishes a hierarchy of pleasures, corresponding to the order of values in goodness. First comes the pleasure which is connected with pure speculation; after it, the pleasure associated with the moral virtues; and at the very bottom, the sensitive, corporeal pleasures insofar as these are necessary, that is, are initiated in the way and in the measure prescribed by nature itself.

From what has been said, it is evident that to Aristotle pleasure is not the first principle he sought. The principle of moral values is the natural order. Pleasure is only a concomitant phenomenon. Pleasure as longing, as satisfaction, or as inclination is of itself decisive neither for good nor for evil; pleasure, however, as joyful happiness presupposes the metaphysical, ethical decision and becomes moreover the symptom and the index of the perfect fulfillment of

such a timeless and objective order. For this reason there are good and evil pleasures and within the good also a gradation, corresponding to the order of being that regulates the activity to which pleasures are joined. Consequently, Aristotle carries on an effective polemic against Eudoxus of Cnidos and rejects his hedonism (*Eth. Nic.*, X, 2).

The morally righteous man does good not because it yields him pleasure, but because of the good itself. Happiness will not be the lot of those men who pursue it avidly for its own sake, but only of those who do what is right. "Let us acknowledge then that each one has just so much of happiness as he has of virtue and wisdom, and of virtuous and wise action. God is a witness to us of this truth, for he is happy and blessed, not by reason of any external good, but in himself and by reason of his own nature" (*Pol.*, VII, 1; 1323 b 21; ed. McKeon, p. 1278). In his teaching on ethical principles, Aristotle is in agreement with Plato; and in what concerns the juridical claim of the ethical value, he is not any less a representative of an objective and normative ethics than Kant himself, without becoming, however, a rigorist. He avoids the taint of rigorism by recognizing that there runs parallel to the natural orientation of life a whole series of phenomena which we call pleasure and in which the perfection of life is mirrored—a fact to which Plato did justice only in his old age, and Kant never.

**The source of ethical knowledge.** If ideal human nature constitutes the content of the moral good, Aristotle must show us where and how the valuableness of this good first forces itself upon our minds. Where does the evidence of value first appear? To Plato it was the idea of good in itself by which all ethical obligation was anchored. In his metaphysics Aristotle rejected this idea, and he contradicts it again in his ethics (*Eth. Nic.*, I, 4). Good can no more be reduced to a common denominator than being itself; it is multiple and consequently can be understood only in an analogous sense; it may possess definite peculiarities in every case, but it cannot be a common notion of genus as was the Platonic idea. Where man strives after good, even in his own handiwork, we always take into consideration the concrete cause, not the good that is the same for all, aside from the fact that good in itself cannot be realized because it is "separated." Aristotle must therefore look elsewhere for the juridical claim of the good.

1) *φρόνησις* (*prudence*) and 2) *όρθος λόγος* (*right reason*). The

notion of prudence embodies such an attempt. Prudence or moral insight is the source of ethically good actions. The man who practices virtue acts as a prudent man. Aristotle therefore explains that the prudent man's viewpoint is of extreme importance in deciding what must be done and what must be avoided. Since many things, even contradictions, appear to be prudent, Aristotle was obliged to make clear just what kind of prudence is final and just how we can recognize objectively the prudent man. Furthermore, he had to show, in respect to those instances in which an individual does not as yet possess prudence, what might be the objective standard which would lead us to true prudence, so that among many things that are designated as prudent we might not choose the wrong one.

His second attempt at an explanation may be found in his notion of right reason (*ὀρθὸς λόγος, ratio recta*). Here reason is defined more precisely. The determination is, however, abstract rather than concrete. What does the word "right" mean? Men are accustomed to designate almost everything possible as right. But we ask again: How do we recognize true rightfulness? Perhaps in the true mean (*μεσότης*)? And this answer gives us the key to his third attempt.

3) *μεσότης, or the golden mean.* In the notion of *mesotes* Aristotle accepted an element which was widely current among the Greek philosophers. He developed it by showing how a whole series of virtues lies in the middle between two extremes, not indeed in a mechanistic sense, but in a middle which is precisely proportioned to the exceptional case. Thus, for example, bravery does not lie exactly in the middle between cowardice and foolhardiness, but closer to foolhardiness; just as, conversely, parsimony is more akin to avarice than it is to prodigality.

To be able to determine, however, between two extremes, we must know what virtue and what vice actually are. The notion of mean includes the knowledge of virtue neither primarily nor creatively apriori, but implies reflection on knowledge already possessed. The mean is therefore not the source of moral knowledge. Finally, we might ponder on the notion of the beautiful and by so doing attempt to clarify the notion of moral value.

4) *καλόν, or the beautiful.* Aristotle oftentimes uses the beautiful as a synonym for the good, especially in his discussion of *kalokagathia* or nobility of character in conduct (*καλοκάγαθία = καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν*). This is a recurring though genuine Greek observation and occurs even today in the oft-repeated phrase: "the good and the beautiful." But even

this is only a peripheral notion. For what is beautiful? This notion is no more univocal than the other concepts that we have thus far mentioned. It is a fact that Aristotle never proposed a criterion of value which proved what the moral good actually was without at the same time assuming it. Perhaps he was of the opinion that the ethical problem had become so crystallized by the work of the Academy that he could effectively lay claim to it as his heritage, even though he did not share with Plato the idealistic theory at its basis.

5) *Is value self-evident?* Perhaps his reference to the life-forms of a prudent man hints at a reality which we today designate as the world of values, so that for Aristotle the moral good, practically if not theoretically, would become known by a glimpse at its reality, just as the color, blue or red, can be grasped in its essence and reality by one who simply has an opportunity to look at it. By such a concept the deep interest that the mature Aristotle devoted to the concrete teaching on virtue might become more understandable. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle does not propound a theonomal morality as he had once before in his early years, both in his *Protrepticus* and afterwards in his *Eudemian Ethics*; and he did not acknowledge any future retribution for this life in the next world. Aristotle propounded no myths about the next life which in Plato sanctioned morality, at least extrinsically, if not intrinsically. The life of a morally good person is justification of itself by itself, that is, by its nobility and its beauty. If we should consider this well and if, in addition, we should weigh well the fact that material external goods entered into the notion of eudaemonism which Aristotle developed, we would appreciate much more readily that the ethics of Aristotle is the ethics of a morally well-educated and cultured man of the world, the reality of which we have only to see in order immediately to affirm its worth and to experience it as just, prudent, moderate, and beautiful. Just as in his metaphysics, so also in his ethics the mature Aristotle devoted himself to the clarification of the concrete experiential reality.

## 2. TEACHING ON VIRTUE

In his theory on virtue we can recognize very clearly that Aristotle was a man of experience. He defines virtue, divides it, and describes it in all its parts, real and potential, with an amazing grasp of details and finally suggests practical means of acquiring it. What he actually does is give us both a phenomenology of values and the foundation

for a phenomenology of human character. Theophrastus needed only to develop what he had found in Aristotle to be able to write the lives of his "characters." We have already spoken of the importance of Aristotle's teaching on virtue for a substantial completion to his study of man.

**Virtue and virtues.** To Aristotle virtue is: "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e., the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it" (*Eth. Nic.*, II, 6; 1106 b 36; ed. McKeon, p. 959). Or more briefly: Virtue is the naturally just action of a man who is perfect. And since the specific nature of man consists in his reason, and since reason may be divided into speculation and conation (the will), there emerge two chief groups of virtues: the dianoetic (pertaining to speculation) and the ethical (pertaining to conation).

1) *Dianoetical virtues.* The former are the perfections of the pure intellect, as we come in contact with them in wisdom (*σοφία*), in reason (*νοῦς*), and in knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*). In them, as we can see, knowledge for knowledge's sake, for the sake of the sheer contemplation of truth (*θεωρία τῆς ἀληθείας*) puts in an appearance (theoretical reason). We also come in contact with them in the ability to make or art (*τέχνη*) and in insight or prudence (*φρόνησις*) where we have to deal with acquired knowledge in the realm of practical reason.

In such terminology we can still sense both Socratism and Platonism in which the whole of human life is understood, if not in reality, at least in terminology, in a purely intellectual fashion. Precisely by distinguishing between theoretical and practical reason Aristotle closely approaches reality.

2) *Ethical virtues.* But he does this much more effectively by introducing the notion of ethical virtue. This kind of virtue does justice to the will as a spiritual power which is radically different from intellect. The ethical virtues have to do with the mastery of the soul over both the body and its appetites. In this respect Aristotle based his views on Platonic psychology which assumed that man's soul possessed both dominant and subservient parts, and had discarded the Socratic reduction of all virtue to knowledge. But he also described the new reality more precisely and more comprehensively when he gives us a conspectus of the moral virtues which are brought into the discussion and delineates them in their specific individuality in a manner that is phenomenologically true: bravery,

self-mastery, generosity, high spiritedness, magnanimity, love of honor, mildness, truthfulness, urbanity, justice, and friendship (*Eth. Nic.*, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX).

**The road to virtue.** Sober reality finds expression again in Aristotle in connection with the origin of virtue. He realized the importance attached to a sound original nature, the natural dispositions; he evaluates the knowledge of value which is necessary here, emphasizes especially the conscious striving after the good without appropriating to himself the exaggerated thesis of Socrates that virtue can be taught, rates highly the value of a good education, and stresses both repetition and practice as decisive factors both in education and in the acquisition of virtue. An apprentice becomes a builder by building, and he becomes a master craftsman by erecting structures of superior quality. In like fashion the individual can become temperate by mastering himself and by thinking correctly and acting justly. Soberly he confirms the fact that the practical and the most successful way to acquire virtue is to observe the law, which directs man along certain paths. Legal virtue is not ideal morality; but viewed naturally and objectively it is very valuable, since the average man is not usually motivated by philosophical and ethical ideals, but generally conducts himself in accordance with customs and laws.

### 3. WILL AND FREEDOM

When Aristotle refused to characterize virtue, as had been done before him especially by Socrates, as knowledge or understanding (*ἐπιστήμη*), but as a state or habit of the will (*ἔξις προαιρετική*), he advanced the study of moral science in a positive direction. By such a concept he wrote a new chapter in the theory of ethics, namely, the teaching on the will (*Eth. Nic.*, III, 1-8). The will differs from knowledge. We can best describe its exclusive property by saying that willing denotes an activity whose principle lies within us: a will-act in a general sense (*ἔκοντιον*, "the voluntary"). Every moral act must be essentially of this kind. But it must not emanate only from the will, for the principle of the act is in the one performing it. Acts can be performed by children and infants as well as by those who are under duress, or who are unconscious. A moral act must therefore be a specifically human act, and the human act that of a mature individual; it must be a free election. Free will (*προαιρεσίς*) is something more than just an act of will in the absolute sense. The principle of an act is found to be in us in such a way that we are able to

control both our own actions and omissions freely and with complete mastery. Aristotle is a disciple of the freedom of the will. He derives the reality of that freedom directly from the testimony of our consciousness and indirectly from the fact of reward and punishment. As presuppositions for the choice of the will, we must assume knowledge and an object that can be willed. To act freely means to act with purpose and deliberation. Reason can actually guide the will; and oftentimes, as a result of a terminology which stems from the Socratic school, it would appear as if, for Aristotle at least, the election of the will were nothing more than a rational insight into the motive of value. Actually, however, Aristotle knew that a person can act against the dictates of reason and, as a consequence, the moral judgments of value must be referred ultimately to the free will as such. The result of this reasoning is something that in the interim has become the common heritage of the student of ethics, namely, that knowledge and will are the basic elements in moral acts.

#### 4. POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Purpose of the state.** The consummation and the totality of morality is presented to us in the state. Aristotle was ignorant of the modern antimony between politics and morality; in fact, he recognized in politics the supreme organization of morality. Only in the community does the individual reach his completion and only in the community is the good realized on a grand scale (*Pol.*, III, 9; *Eth. Nic.*, X, 10). In the possession of law, man is a noble creature; without it he is a veritable beast. The one who first called the state into being was for his benefaction the creator of a supreme value (*Pol.*, I, 2; 1253 a 30: "The greatest of benefactors"; ed. McKeon, p. 1130).

The state is therefore not merely a provision for the needs of physical existence or for the promotion of great enterprises in economics and business or an institution supporting the pretensions of power politics. True, the state does pursue some, if not all these purposes, but its chief aim in relation to which all these others are only auxiliary or subordinate is the "good" and "perfect" life, that is, mankind elevated both morally and spiritually. The state arose for the purpose of preserving human life, but it continues to exist for the sake of eudaemonism, hence for the sake of moral greatness. Pure utility is not its purpose, nor is brute power its be-all, but "noble deeds," a happy and beautiful life (*εὐδαιμόνως καὶ καλῶς ζῆν*; *Pol.*, III, 9; 1281 a 2). We must work, runs one of Aristotle's axioms,

for the sake of leisure and we wage war to preserve peace. "Hence we may infer that what is noble, not what is brutal, should have the first place; no wolf or other wild animal will face a really noble danger; such dangers are for brave men. And parents who devote their children to gymnastics while they neglect their necessary education, in reality vulgarize them" (*Pol.*, VIII, 4; 1338 b 29; ed. McKeon, p. 1309).

**Origin of the state.** We can consider the origin of the state both genetically and metaphysically, that is, under the aspect of its origin in time and correspondingly under the aspect of its origin in the ideal, logical sense (*Pol.*, I, 2).

1) *Genetically, or its origin in time.* Concerning the origin of the state in terms of time and of place, we find that the state stands at the end of a process of development or evolution. Considered physically, the individual, the family or the tribe, and the hamlet precede the state. These communities, which are prior in time, are unable to care for themselves sufficiently. In their isolation they are neither strong enough to defend themselves against their enemies, nor in production, commerce, and trade are they capable of reaching a full evolution of their potentialities. They, therefore, band together into communities of interest by pooling their resources; that is to say, they form a state. The state is sufficient unto itself: it is an autarchy. For the first time in the work of Aristotle we encounter this notion of political philosophy, from which later on the idea of state sovereignty will arise.

2) *Metaphysically, or its origin in nature.* The genetic consideration of the state in time does not, however, express the full truth. If instead of the evolution of the state we should examine its essence and its purpose, we would discover that the state did not come at the end of a process of development but at its beginning. That men band together is not a matter left to their discretion, for that would mean that the formation of the state rested upon a fictional and arbitrary contract. In forming a state, men follow an essential bent in their nature. "Man is by nature a political animal" (*Pol.*, I, 2; 1253 a 2; ed. McKeon, p. 1129). The notion of man is so conditioned *a priori* that he is compelled, as it were, by nature to form a state. This impulse to form a state is inherent both in the individual and in the family, not only as an accidental but also as an essential element of their being. As a consequence, the idea of a state codetermines the formation of the individual, of the family, and of the hamlet community.

On the basis of this Aristotle says that from a metaphysical standpoint: "The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part" (*Pol.*, I, 2; 1253 a 19; ed. McKeon, p. 1129).

Aristotle discovered that the strongest argument for man's natural propensity for a community is to be found in the possession of speech. Considered from the standpoint of nature, speech tends to bind men together. Speech reveals that the human will to community is something more than an animal instinct to herd. Animals are endowed with the ability to make noise so that they can give evidence of their lusts and of their sufferings. Men, on the other hand, possess language. Their words are the means of communicating to others their thoughts concerning the useful and the harmful, justice and injustice, good and evil; in other words, they are means men use to make themselves understood in connection with the purpose of the state, derived from a consideration of truth and value.

**The mode of the state's existence.** 1) *The state and its components (the individual and the community).* Everything that we have thus far written is summarized in Aristotle's theory concerning the essence of the state. The state is an association of citizens. To Aristotle a citizen is a free man, one who is privileged to use the courts and to share in the functions of government.

Aristotle is a realist. No matter how clearly he perceived the ideal, logical priority of the state to the individual and the family, he nevertheless recognized that the proper mode of being in the state in the sense of real existence is realized only in individuals, families, and communities which exist in time and place. These form the elements of the state and constitute its reality. They are not, as it were, the transitional stages which must be passed through and then possess no function other than to lapse back into nothingness, so that the whole might become everything. To disband and to dissolve them, or to render them insignificant, would lead to the dissolution of the state itself and would despoil it of its own proper reality.

The idea of a whole, however, is not sterile; it can be realized; it remains logically prior. In like fashion the elements of the state—individuals, families, and communities—form actual and effective realities. In the Aristotelian philosophy of the state we can recognize anew the complete Aristotelian theory of knowledge and metaphysics. The metaphysical ideality constitutes the form of everything real. But the idea is not everything; alongside it may be found the

reality of the individual and of the concrete as proper and independent actualities, and from these are drawn the rights of the elements as the primary realities to support and to maintain the state. By and from these elements the state exists, just as the second substance exists because of the first. That obligations and duties arise because of these rights is evident from the immanent convergence of these elements on the formation of the state. The essential rights and duties do not arise by mere chance or from the sheer use of force; they are natural and *a priori*.

In his political philosophy, Aristotle unites in a most happy fashion ideality and reality, the whole and its parts, the community and the individuals, rights and duties. The result is a synthesis in which the one aspect supposes and affirms the other, just as correlative notions presuppose and affirm one another, or just as in a polar tension the whole is presupposed and affirmed by the contraries and the contraries by the whole. Aristotle transferred the reality of the state to the community of citizens; but he considered the state neither exclusively from the viewpoint of an aggregate nor from that of an integral whole but linked both. Practically, his theory of the essence of the state presupposes the free citizen as a mature individual without thereby advancing the cause of individualism.

2) *Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic Utopia.* As a result of his theory we can better understand Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory of the state. Solely to protect the unity and the power of the state, Plato had recommended the community of women and the communism of goods for that class of guardians who guided the destiny of the state. Contrary to such a theory Aristotle argues: Through a rejection of the family many noble human values are lost to the human race. Thus, for example, the relation of men to women would no longer be one of friendship, of benevolence and mutual aid, but simply one of natural sexual selection for purposes of procreation. There would, moreover, no longer be any continence and self-control, and no longer love and fidelity. In fact, the unity that Plato had envisaged would become impossible of achievement; for should a man be faced by perhaps a thousand young men he could believe only with the possibility of one chance in a thousand that he stood actually in the presence of his own son. Such a man would scarcely feel himself drawn or attached to the youth.

Insofar as communism is concerned, valuable human virtues would no longer be practiced, e.g., beneficent love (a love of bestowing

gifts), liberality and charity, but especially the love of self which is ever present in the joy awakened by the possession of private property. Self-love is vicious only in those instances in which it is combined with unhealthy extravagances; in a true concept of right order, it is something natural and morally valuable. To this we must add that if everything belonged to everyone, no one would assert himself in favor of anything with any show of interest. And the cause would not be difficult to find; for we do not bestow our usual care on what we do not own. Private property as such does not provoke strife that might arise in a state, although immoderation in its acquisition and selfishness in its possession do. Consequently the state is forced to frame judicious provisions so that excesses might be avoided. For extreme wealth inclines its possessor to extravagance, to arrogance, to tyranny, and to lawlessness; whereas poverty is the mother of servile submission, of dissatisfaction, of corruption, and of revolution. Just as the acquisition, so in a similar fashion the use of property must be governed by moral principles. The precept that should be invoked as the lodestar would run as follows: Among friends everything is in common.

If we should think through this entire criticism of Plato's theory, we would finally arrive at the conclusion that Aristotle had one cardinal idea always before his mind's eye: Individuals and families are the primary realities; they must never be sacrificed in favor of any idea that could not exist without them; that is, the metaphysics of Aristotle determines his theory of the state.

**Politics of the state. 1) Foreign policy.** The principles that should be employed in the political guidance of the people are fixed by ethics. Foreign policy may not be power politics. The task or function of the statesman is not—Aristotle thought it to be absurd—to make himself lord and master of his neighbors. Does not the word, statesman, mean simply to be the advocate of politics and law? How could we think that his proper function was to champion injustice? "Most men appear to think that the art of despotic government is statesmanship, and what men affirm to be unjust and inexpedient in their own case they are not ashamed of practising towards others; they demand just rule for themselves, but where other men are concerned they care nothing about it" (*Pol.*, VII, 2; 1324 b 32; ed. McKeon, p. 1280). Aristotle perceived very clearly the woeful consequences which would result from such power politics. Such a travesty must necessarily foster the growth of a like doctrine within the state itself. If some-

one were to praise a lawmaker because he had mastered the science of oppressing neighboring states, "any citizen who could, should obviously try to obtain power in his own state" (*Pol.*, VII, 14; 1333 b 31; ed. McKeon, p. 1299).

2) *Interior policy.* Aristotle is especially set against power politics within the state itself. It is said, so he muses, that a person must act ruthlessly and on occasion even unjustly if he should ever hope to realize the attainment of grandiose ambitions. Such a policy, however, would almost necessarily lead to a mortal struggle for power which would eventually destroy all human order. There are only two conditions which could justify the existence of despotism: first, if the sublimest meaning and the supreme value of life were allied with robbery and power; second, if there were individuals who were as superior to fellow men as a master to his slaves, or a husband to his wife, or a father to his child. The first of these two conditions is certainly false, because it is contrary to the primary laws of ethics; and the second would very seldom be verified, for such superior persons exist more in fable than they do in reality (*Pol.*, VII, 3). So long as these stipulations are not fulfilled, there cannot be any preferences shown, nor guardianships exercised. "Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons, and no government can stand which is not founded upon justice" (*Pol.*, VII, 14; 1332 b 27; ed. McKeon, p. 1296). Those who possess special qualities have also special rights. This is a dictate of nature itself; everything else is contrary to reason. As a matter of fact, there must be some subordination in the state itself. Aristotle was so firmly convinced of this that he authored a principle for those who are in command: Fit to command is that person alone who has himself learned to obey. But a citizen should obey as a freeman among freemen, and not as an unfranchised slave among despots.

3) *Aristotle's limitations.* No matter how highly we esteem the sentiments that are expressed in these thoughts, the limitations of our philosopher become evident in them. If he advocates slavery, because "by nature" there are individuals who are born to dominate and others to be dominated; and if he takes for granted an essential distinction of rank between husband and wife as well as between races and peoples; and if in general his ethics and his politics deal, as was the case with Plato, more with the "superior" than with ordinary men; and if he occasionally champions the murder of the unborn and the exposure of the unwanted (*Pol.*, VII, 16), we must

remember that what he expounds is no longer the *philosophia perennis*, but only the spirit of the time and a token of its culture which seeks to express itself.

**Kinds of states.** Aristotle would not be Aristotle if in this matter he did not try to describe and to order the reality which he knew. Thus he offers us an overview of the possible forms of the state in which the life of the community could be molded. The viewpoints by which we are enabled to differentiate among the various forms of the state are: the number of rulers, their wealth and their ability, and the purpose for which they seek to exercise their power. If we should find that the rulers rule for the welfare of the people, we would be dealing with an optimum form of the state. If in such a state there were but one ruler, and he the best, the form of the state would be a *monarchy*. If there were several persons and these of the better class, it would be an *aristocracy*. If all the citizens should share in the government because all were similarly gifted, it would be a *commonwealth* (republic). If we should find that the government was being run simply for the benefit of those who were in power, we would be faced with an evil, with a degenerate form of the state. If in such a state there should be only one ruler, the type of government would be called a *tyranny*, which represents the worst possible kind of decadence. If there were several who shared in such a regime and these were drawn from the moneyed class, we would have an *oligarchy*; but if it were not a group of the privileged class, but on the contrary, a motley of penurious rabble, and these shared in the government in their entirety, we would have a *democracy*.

There are, of course, in all these forms always several or more variants. Thus, for example, Aristotle enumerates five different forms of a democracy, four types of oligarchy, three kinds of aristocracy, and two species of commonwealth (*Pol.*, IV, 3 ff.). He personally held that the ideal form of the state was a monarchy, but he firmly believed that it could never be achieved. His second choice was an aristocracy. This form is feasible, but it would be better if it were merged with the forms of an oligarchy and a democracy in which stress was to be placed on the creation and the support of a well-to-do middle class. Excessive wealth and excessive poverty are extremes and are therefore worthless. We should never be biased in our judgment, but we should try to discover the good points in the other systems, something which "political bigwigs" are incapable of doing, because they know and appreciate only their own standpoint and ride their principles to

death. The research which Aristotle conducted in connection with the origin, preservation, and decline of the several forms of the state reveals a deep understanding of reality.

If we still possessed and could still examine the 158 different constitutions of states which were based on an extensive analysis of experiential material, we would be convinced that this philosopher could be called the anatomist of social life, as we have already come to know him as the anatomist of the structure of the logical mind and of metaphysical being. And how zealously he developed not only his social theory but also philosophy as a practical force which shapes life itself would be revealed to us if we possessed his writings addressed to Alexander treating of both the monarchy and colonization. In an exceptionally beautiful harmony, the philosophy of Aristotle is a happy union of theory and practice, truth and life.

### THE OLDER PERIPATETICS

Just as a definite school arose in the Academy around Plato, so one rose in the Lyceum around Aristotle. This school bears the name Peripatos or Peripatetic, probably because of the arcade which was a landmark on the grounds in which it was located. In contradistinction to the later Peripatos, which lasted until the third century of the Christian era, we call the school which existed within the first fifty years after Aristotle the older Peripatos. The personages who guided its destiny were Theophrastus of Eresus (d. 287 B.C.) on the island of Lesbos, who succeeded Aristotle himself in the conduct of the school, Eudemus of Rhodes, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, Diciarchus of Messene, the physician Menon, and Demetrius of Phaleron.

This school fostered the investigation of the various special sciences as this had been inaugurated by Aristotle himself. Theophrastus sought to develop the history of philosophy, ethical characterology, botanical studies, history of law, and both the philosophy and the history of religion. Aristoxenus cultivated the theory as well as the history of music. Diciarchus wrote a cultural history of Greece; Menon, a history of medicine and astronomy. Demetrius encouraged the founding of the renowned library at Alexandria.

In this connection we must not forget that philosophical speculation is synthesis and superstructure. On the whole the school remained faithful to its master in cosmology, ethics, and psychology, but in metaphysics Theophrastus propounded a whole series of philosophical difficulties or puzzles which were foreign to the spirit of Aristotle,

and by so doing he paved the way for a tendency which will appear even stronger in the later course of the Peripatos. This tendency had its basis in an ambiguous position adopted by Aristotle. The Stagirite, on the one hand, had rejected the Platonic idea and in opposition to it had introduced a new idea of reality based on the material nature of space and time; on the other hand, he sought to introduce the idea as a form, at least in the world. Was the form of any consequence if it had lost its Platonic character? And what did Aristotle think was the decisive element? The sensory material reality or the metaphysical form? Should we explain Aristotle in an "Aristotelian" or in a "Platonic" sense? Eudemus appears to have adopted the latter position; Aristoxenus, the former, for he refused to assume the existence of the individual soul and saw in it only a harmony of forces. Even Theophrastus may be said to have turned toward naturalism. He criticized Aristotle's teleology, the relation of God to the world, and the idea of the *Nous*. In Strato of Lampsacus we will become better acquainted with these concepts as they become more completely developed.

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### SECTION 3. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HELLENISM AND OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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**Hellenism.** In the Hellenistic period, a historical philosophical process was completed, the results of which are important even for our own modern concept of philosophy, namely, the development of philosophy into a special science. In pre-Socratic times the philosopher was, so to speak, a *factotum*: he was scientist, physician, technician, politician, and "sage" in one. Also, the Academy and the Peripatos, as scientific organizations, still encompassed all branches of knowledge. But in the older Peripatos we can begin to detect how the single sciences absorbed the whole man and gave him his spiritual lineaments, even when the school itself still continued to philosophize in consonance with the ancient norms.

In the Hellenistic period the various special sciences became organized as independent branches of knowledge. Concomitantly there arose special centers of research in which men cultivated and fostered the sciences *ex professo*: Alexandria, Antioch, Pergamos, and Rhodes. Philosophy, however, contented itself with the great problems which Plato and Aristotle had brought to the fore as its proper subject matter, that is to say, with those of logic, ethics, and metaphysics. In the process, philosophy itself became more profound and grew to become a scientific attempt at formulating an entire outlook on life. Philosophy dealt with man as such, who in the troubled and uncertain times of Alexander and his successors looked to the interior man for salvation and for that happiness which external circumstances could no longer assure or produce, circumstances which should have afforded him the stuff of dreams but instead confronted him with ever greater and ever more widespread devastation. For this reason ethics came into more than due prominence during the period. Philosophy also had to take over the tasks which the ancient myths had at one time fulfilled. More and more these tales were pulverized on the rock of reality and finally through the deadly onslaught of rationalist speculation entirely disappeared. Stoicism and Epicureanism offered a new cure of souls and by so doing exercised a great influence over wider areas of society than the Academy and the Peripatos had ever been able to reach. Since the well-rounded ide-

ologies acted as nuclei of crystallization, in the Hellenistic period they promoted the founding of striking scholastic institutions and were typical of the epoch: the Stoa and the Garden of Epicurus took their place alongside the still flourishing Academy and the Peripatos.

**The Roman Empire.** Due to the appearance of the Roman emperors the times became ever more turbulent, men grew interiorly ever more restless and were filled with ever greater longings. When, at the nadir of the decadence, an historical personage appears in the person of Christ who says of Himself that He is the "light of the world," the "resurrection and the life," we arrive at the great turning point in secular affairs. In fact, Christianity eventually succeeded in establishing itself and gradually wrested the guidance of man from the hands of philosophy. During the era of the Roman emperors the old philosophical schools, however, still continued to exist. But they became enervated and collapsed one after another. From time to time heroic efforts were made to resuscitate the spirit of the old culture, especially in the revival known as Neo-Platonism. But the historical process could not be stopped. In A.D. 529 when the Emperor Justinian closed the doors of the old schools of philosophy and prohibited the teaching of philosophy itself in Athens, his edict might have appeared to the general public as an act of violence. In reality it was only the ratification of already existing conditions.

Since the role of Christianity was not that of a conqueror but a means of searching for the truth, it did not uproot Greek philosophy but absorbed it. The enduring truths and genuine values of the ancient schools were appropriated. What was unable directly to be productive of results because of the course of external historical events placed itself under the protection of the great minds of Christendom and flourished again in the soul of Christianity itself, in its science and its culture. True, by so doing, it lived a life in a changed form, but it lived nevertheless a new life.

# CHAPTER 10

## THE STOICS

### THE PHILOSOPHERS OF STOICISM

**The early Stoa.** Again it was Athens where this new branch of philosophical speculation flourished, and it was again the meeting place which gave the school its name: the colorful hall painted by Polygnot. Its philosophers are divided into the early, the middle, and the later Stoics. The founder of the early school was Zeno of Citium in Cyprus (c. 300 b.c.). He was a pupil of the Cynic, Crates, of Stilpo the Megaric, and of Zenocrates the Academician. Cynicism left the most lasting impression on him—and indeed it is typical of the entire Stoa. We meet this influence in their theory of knowledge, in their metaphysics, and in their ethics. Zeno was revered for his sterling character. He departed this life of his own free will in 262 b.c. His successor was Cleanthes of Assos, likewise a man of rare abnegation, strength of will, moral forthrightness, and religious piety. Through him we possess those first hymns to Zeus which are so characteristic of the Stoics, hymns which pulsate with deep religious feeling. He died from self-imposed starvation in 233 b.c. Among his numerous renowned students we find Arat of Soloi in Cilicia. To him we trace a hymn to Zeus which St. Paul quoted in the following words: “As indeed some of your own poets have said: ‘For we are also his offspring’” (Acts 17:28). The most famous among the scholars belonging to the early Stoa is Chrysippus of Soloi (208 b.c.). He is looked upon as the second founder of the Stoa; he was a successful teacher and a prolific writer.

**The middle Stoa.** The middle Stoa may be dated midway between the second and the first centuries before Christ. Its two chief representatives were Panaetius of Rhodes and Poseidonius of Apamaea. Panaetius (d. 110 b.c.) assumed charge of the school at Athens in 92 b.c. He lived for a considerable length of time in Rome. While here, he moved in the intellectual circles of Scipio Africanus Minor,

of his friend Laelius, and of the chief priest Mucius Scaevola. After his sojourn there and perhaps because of it, philosophy was accorded a new rating in Rome: it began to be recognized as one of the essentials of higher culture. If philosophy actually became acclimatized to Rome, this must be ascribed primarily to the Stoics. Their system was tailor-made for the Roman genius. For this reason the works of Panaetius on commission and omission, on peace of mind and on providence, were drawn upon by Cicero, especially for his treatise on duties, *De Officiis*.

Poseidonius of Apamaea (d. 51 B.C.) lived in Rhodes. It was there that Cicero attended his lectures and there that Pompey visited him. After Democritus and Aristotle, he was the last polyhistor of Greece. His influence upon his contemporaries and upon succeeding generations was great. Julian the Apostate quoted him in his pagan speech in honor of King Helios, as did the Christian Bishop, Nemesius, in his tract on the nature of man. The pseudo-Aristotelian disputation, *On the World*, imitates him.

**The later Stoa.** Among the later members of the Stoa three men stand out prominently. First is Seneca, the teacher of Nero, who in obedience to the latter's command opened his veins in A.D. 65. Among the treatises most characteristic of his views are the *Naturales Quaestiones* (problems of the natural sciences), his dissertations on *Mildness*, *Clemency*, and *Anger*, as well as his twenty books of *Moral Letters*, in which he paints a very dreary picture of the customs and vices of his era. Next is Epictetus, a slave of Hierapolis, who as a manumitted freeman lived in Rome (A.D. 138) and from whom we trace the famous *Handbook of Morality* (inventoried by his pupil, Flavius Arrianus). The third member of this group is Marcus Aurelius, the "philosopher on the emperor's throne" (A.D. 180). To him we owe the renowned twelve books of *Meditations*, written in Greek and entitled "To Myself," the *Aphorisms* and the *Diaries*, in part written on the battlefield. These do as much credit to his sublime sentiments as they are typical of Stoicism itself.

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What did philosophy mean to the Stoics? They defined it as the science of divine and human things. They divided it into logic, physics, and ethics.

## LOGIC

Logic is not only a formal but also a material science; that is to say, it discusses the problems connected with the theory of knowledge.

### 1. THE FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

**Sensualism.** The first question they attempted to answer was the one relating to the origin of our knowledge. On this point Stoic speculation is sensualistic and thereby reveals its affinity to cynicism. The Stoics insisted that the soul is not an object that can be described *a priori*; rather, it is an empty tablet (*tabula rasa*). Before it can begin to function it must be filled with contents which sense perceptions deliver to it. Those things that enter the soul are representations and nothing but representations. The intellect does not, moreover, possess immaterial contents. True, it changes the representations and develops them further, and even synthesizes them, but all it ever possesses is sensible representations.

**The theory of images.** The function of representation and with it that of knowledge in general consists in the formation of images. In this matter we must, however, assume a definite dualism of subject and object. The Stoics taught that the object of knowledge permits itself to be reproduced in its own vivid self in such a way that it is imprinted on the soul as an image. "The representation is that reality, derived from an object and corresponding to it, which is imprinted on the soul as an image, something which could not possibly take place, if nothing were present" (Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, 18). This is not only naïve dualism; it demonstrates also how in his theory of the genesis of knowledge only a knowledge of the external material world was taken into consideration, a fact which

may be explained by the universal materialism of the Stoics. It would be a rewarding task to investigate how profoundly in succeeding centuries the Aristotelian theory of knowledge was influenced by this concept, for Aristotle's theory was also a theory of images. His theory was, however, based upon an entirely different background. The *eidos* or form of which the Aristotelian *Nous* availed itself was not a sensory residue of still another sensory phenomenon, but was the spiritual structural form of the metaphysical being of the object itself. In Aristotelianism the *eidos* could function as a structural form antecedent to space-time objects and could be endowed with apriority, because Aristotle taught that the *Nous*, insofar as it is creative, also possesses an *apriori* aspect, which for him is typical of the knowledge of an essence. In such a theory we may discern features which are proper both to Platonism and to idealism (see p. 156 f.). That these facts were not evaluated later on as they should have been stems from the fact that the Aristotelian concept was exposed to Stoic influences. The relations between the Peripatetics and the Stoics were neither few nor inconsequential, and the succeeding eras, those of the Fathers and of the Middle Ages, were brought within the ambit both of the Aristotelian and the Stoic logic. In this connection "Aristotle" connotes often only the school, the *Peripatos*, and this in turn is frequently covered over by Stoic views.

**Criterion of truth.** If knowing consists in the formation of images, we must naturally attempt to arrive at a guarantee for the validity of truth. We can be deceived in our sense perceptions. What assurances do we have that our images correspond to the original object? We may find such a criterion of the truth in the *catalepsis*, that is, in that quality of our representations which we are unable to impugn, that is to say, a certain something that "overwhelms us." Cataleptic representations possess evidence (*ἐπάργεια*) or clarity. This notion has its roots not only in the Stoic but also in the Epicurean theory of knowledge, whereas it is significantly missing in the work of Aristotle. The former are sensualists and naïve realists; the latter is not. According to the Stoics, evidence (or clarity) is present when the following conditions are verified: the distance, both in time and in space, between the object that is perceived sensorily and the subject perceiving it is not too great; the act of perception lasts for a sufficient length of time and takes place in a sufficiently thorough manner; no medium obtrudes itself disturbingly between the subject and the object; repeated perceptions, both those of oneself and those

of others, have the same result. Under these circumstances we cannot refuse to give assent to such a representation. From this concept of assent (approval) (*συγκατάθεσις*) we easily perceive that in the realm of knowledge the Stoics were also aware of the presence and the importance of the will. By this we can also appreciate how great a role their system accorded it. We become convinced that to them man is not a mere speculative, perfectly objective being. They were acutely aware that man brings his will and his wishes to bear on those things which he holds to be true. Nevertheless, it should be evident that by the notion of assent the Stoa did not introduce a subjective voluntaristic theory of truth, especially if one were to examine their formal logic and their teaching concerning the elements of speculation.

## 2. ELEMENTS OF SPECULATION

The elements of formal reasoning were for the Stoics the same as they had been for Aristotle: judgment, concept, and syllogism.

**The judgment.** The judgment represents a viewpoint of the subject, his personal attitude toward a representation. This results from an assent to the representation. This assent denotes the conviction: This is something real which I represent to myself. Since the judgment is the support of truth, we might think that the Stoic theory of judgment left it entirely up to the subject to decide what was true and what false. This is not the case. The Stoic logician makes a distinction: By means of the assent the factual judgment is truly enunciated, but the decision as to its truthfulness or fallacy does not lie within the province of the will which perfects the assent but is formulated on the basis of the diversity of content found in the representation. If it is in accordance with the facts (or the circumstances), the judgment is true; if not, it is false. In the division of judgments the Stoics proceeded after the fashion of Aristotle, but they enlarged upon his groupings by differentiating between simple and compound judgments. The latter are then subdivided into copulative, disjunctive, and hypothetic.

**The concept.** The judgment is composed of concepts. In this the Stoics agree with Aristotle, but they perfect him by their greater precision. According to Aristotle a concept was always examined and explained from the standpoint of words. But among the Stoics a distinction was made between the word as a bare sign, the concept as the designated content of the thought, and the object that was

denoted by it. From their views future logicians will elaborate the distinctions between *terminus* (term), *ratio* (concept), and *res* (thing). With the first of these, grammar is concerned; with the second, logic or dialectics; and with the third, metaphysics. Universal ideas in such a theory are considered to be merely altered representations. They are artificially deduced generalizations in the sense of average types. If they are not pure fabrications, the object to which they adequately correspond is only a phantasm, not a real being as Platonism taught. As the Cynics, so also the Stoics held that only an individual representation corresponds to a real object. In this we may see anew their kinship with the Cynics. Such an assumption is logical for sensualism, and it does actually express a part of the truth which in modern times Berkeley will allege against the "general ideas" of Locke.

Among concepts there are some which appear to arise of themselves. These are such as can be found among all men: common concepts (*κοιναὶ ἔννοιατ; notiones communes*), and they are at the same time basic, i.e., they are presupposed by all knowledge and are therefore called prenotions (*prolepsis*). To these proleptical notions we may ascribe the same cognitional value as we did to the cataleptical or representational. They are all acquired, something that becomes possible at the age of seven, for at that age reason is supposed to awaken. And not only that! The complete individual Logos is also identical with the chief features of the Universal Logos of the world reason, and because the latter fashions the matter of the world, our Logos is enabled to become acquainted with the world. Upon such a foundation rests the argument of *consensus omnium* (universal consent) which Cicero regarded so highly, and apparently upon it depends also the assumption of Canon Law that the child attains the use of reason at the age of seven.

**The syllogism.** The service which the Stoics performed in connection with their teaching on syllogisms is only today being evaluated correctly, contrary to the negative judgment of Prantl. Following the procedure of Theophrastus and Eudemus, the Stoics further perfected the Aristotelian syllogism and syllogistic form by postulating both the disjunctive and the hypothetical syllogisms. By these additions they enriched philosophy by a more complete description of the forms of the mind. Behind these novelties we can, in addition, detect still another feat, that of laying the cornerstone for an elementary logic of predicates that is formal in type. By classifying possible "if so" assertions according to the viewpoints of truth and

falsehood, they supply the formulas which, if we fill them with various contents, permit us without more ado to characterize a predicate as true or false. By so doing they remind us of modern logic in which an extreme logical formalism goes hand in hand with a positivistic-sensualistic theory of knowledge.

## PHYSICS

The physics of the Stoics treats of the great metaphysical problems. Two traits are characteristic of the school: materialism and pantheism.

### 1. AN INTERPRETATION OF BEING: MATERIALISM

Materialism is evident in the Stoic interpretation of being. Given their sensualistic theory of knowledge, we should not be surprised that they reply, in answer to the question concerning the essence of being, that "reality is materiality." Extension is of the essence of everything; it is basic to all being. *Ousia* (substance) is *hypokeimenon* (the underlying substratum) and this in turn is *hyle* or matter. By this interpretation of being Zeno again betrays his ancestry in Cynicism. Extension, to be sure, does not entirely exhaust the whole essence of being. Being possesses still another aspect; it is also power. The Stoics conceived power as that living force which can be found wherever there is breath (*πνεῦμα*), warmth, and fire (*πῦρ*); where life has not yet been drained away or exhausted as in dead bodies, but still possesses its tensions (*τόνος*) or intensity. The notion of power denotes therefore a hylozoistic interpretation of being. Basic to it is a simple observation in the realm of living beings. In this realm power is always equated with breath, warmth, and tension. By their concept of power in connection with the meaning of life, the Stoics did not divide being into various layers as had Aristotle. To them there are no classes of being which are arranged side by side in such a way that they cannot be crossed over. Power is found everywhere, and only gradually do the various classes of being become differentiated one from another. In inorganic nature there is only the pneuma; in the plant world the pneuma reaches the stage of growth; in the animal kingdom it appears as the soul; and in mankind as reason. Basically, though, the pneuma is everywhere present, but it is only another aspect of the material. For this reason being possesses a monistic character. Everything is matter, even the so-called power of life.

## 2. THE EXPLORATION OF BEING: PANTHEISM

**Immanent World-Reason.** The essential pantheism of the Stoics confronts us in the problem touching upon the ultimate basis of being. They knew and appreciated this problem but in their search after the ultimate basis of being they flatly rejected to place its source outside the material world. "It is perfect nonsense," says Pliny, "to try to transport oneself beyond and outside the world and there to study the cosmos, as if everything within the world had already been sufficiently well-known" (*Nat. Hist.*, II, 1). The cause of the world is to be found in the world itself. The world is eternal, immeasurable, and so infinite that it is fertile enough to supply an explanation for itself. Consequently the Stoics offer us an explanatory principle for the world and for the world-process. This principle is, however, an immanent one. It is its primeval power, which may also be designated as primeval fire, primeval pneuma, or the world soul; and it may also be called the World-Reason (*logos*), world law (*nomos, lex naturalis*), providence (*pronoia, providentia*), and fate (*heimarmene, fatum*). By it matter is formed and motion is given its original impetus in accordance with definite laws and norms. The World-Reason contains within itself eternal thoughts for the entire future, so that its ideas are the seed of the future (*λόγοι σπερματικοί, rationes seminales*). Through this a strict order is introduced into everything that happens, even in the exaggerated form of a return of all things (reincarnation). Everything that happens is arranged in great cycles. By reason of its content of ideas the World-Reason fashions creatures and cosmic events. But at the expiration of definite periods a cosmic conflagration will consume all that exists and will return all things by means of a monstrous mass of fiery miasma to the primeval cosmic fire. This fire will eventually permit them to return. Then, by the same orientation of heavenly bodies, Socrates and Plato will be found again to exist among us, and every human being will discover himself again among his old friends and fellow citizens. This resurgence of all things (*ἀποκατάστασις τοῦ παντός*) will be repeated not only once, but many times, in fact, an infinite number of times. This same thing will recur over and over again, because it will never be able to be fully completed (Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, II, 190). Cosmic reason and providence which are evident in this process are not the thought and the commands of an autonomous, personal spirit, but the orderly arrangement of matter itself both in its events

and its movements, that is to say, in an infinite series of causes (*series implexa causarum*). Matter is the final reality; Stoicism remained adamantly materialistic.

**Rationes seminales** or **seminal principles**. Even the *rationes seminales* are material causes, not ideas. Even here the Stoics appropriated only the bare word, altering its meaning. Genuine ideas as distant objectives and placed in the future hover over development, and this development hastens toward them. Matter yearns after a form, as Aristotle had said. The Stoic *rationes seminales*, however, stand at the beginning of the development. They do not form an ideal *telos* (end), but are physical causes of a material kind within the framework of a universal series of causes. Even a predisposition in its biological meaning is a physical cause, and the biological predisposition appears among the Stoics to have been originally an illustration for the *logos spermaticos* (seminal principle). In any case, the explanation which Aetius and Sextus Empiricus offer is important, for they give us to understand that the causes advanced by the Stoics are of a material, corporeal kind (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 119, 18–25). Especially characteristic are the words of Critolaus that Fate (*heimarmene*) is without direction and without purpose (*ἄναρχος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος*) (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 265, 5). Natural predispositions proposed by the Stoics are accordingly something other than the natural predispositions propounded by Aristotle. The latter conceived ideal nature as an ideal *telos*; the former, the biological predispositions as physical causality. That savants later on interpreted the Aristotelian ethical principle as something determined by natural predisposition is not only an unjustifiable modernization (W. Jaeger), but also an aftereffect produced by the Stoics and their conception of the *rationes seminales*.

**Theogony as cosmogony.** If primary and primeval Power is called Zeus and divine, this must be understood only within its own context. God, Reason, Fate, and Nature are one and the same thing; this is expressly repeated over and over again (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 273, 25; 179, 35; I, 28, 22). If for this reason and in connection with the doctrine of cosmic cycles it is said that Zeus matures, until he consumes all things within himself (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 185, 44), this description of a theogony is in reality a cosmogony. The Stoics are in no sense theists, but pantheists. If the world created itself, if it is an “autarch,” it occupies the niche that should be reserved only for God and is itself God.

### 3. STOIC RELIGIOSITY

Despite the interpretation of *fanum* (the sacred) as *profanum* (the worldly), Stoic religiosity is a genuine, warm, and deep-seated sentiment as we can see for ourselves in the hymns to Zeus that have been preserved. E. Norden has termed an ancient *Gloria* that paean of praise to the God of the universe which begins with the solemn phrases: "It is only fitting to consider the cosmos and all that to which we attribute that other name, heaven, by whose revolutions the universe has its living existence, as God, as eternal, as holy, immense, unbegotten, and immortal." The many personal terms which are employed in these ancient hymns to designate the divinity, and which have their origin chiefly in the mythology of Homer, are nonetheless mere metaphors and should create no other impression than that the religious sentiment of the Stoics was purely natural, for their God remains the universe. Even the words which St. Paul quotes in Acts (17:28) originally had a pantheistic meaning.

### 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THEIR PHILOSOPHY

From the physics of the Stoics we gain the impression that this is a school with a very long philosophical tradition behind it which it was compelled to turn to account. Influence was exerted upon it from all sides. From the Cynics the school drew its basic principle of materialism. From Heraclitus it took the treatment of the cosmic intellect and of cosmic law as well as the notion of primeval fire. Again from Heraclitus and also from the Pythagoreans it borrowed the idea of cycles in the world processes. From Plato's world of ideas and from the world of Aristotelian forms it developed its teaching on the *rationes seminales*. By drawing further consequences from these principles, the Stoics revised the meanings of the older terms and in their revised form fitted them into their own system. Critics have charged that Zeno had established a school of his own without justification; he should not have done so because his system merely appropriated and plagiarized the teachings of the renowned minds of the past. Those who attend only to verbal similarities might possibly agree with such a charge. Those who weigh the thoughts behind the words realize, however, that when two persons say the same thing, the meaning which they seek to convey is not necessarily the same in both instances; they may not necessarily express the same thought.

## ETHICS

The Stoics have been most acclaimed for their contribution to the science of ethics. Precisely through it their philosophy achieved an intellectual force, the effectiveness of which spread their fame far and wide. The ethics of the Stoics presupposes a whole variety of opinions on the life of the soul which are not truly psychological, but form more or less the anthropological and dogmatic basis of Stoic morality. We shall discuss these briefly in the following section.

## 1. THE SOUL-LIFE OF MAN

**Notion and essence of the soul.** Man is not only a body; he also possesses a soul. The word *soul* can be understood in a variety of ways. In one way the soul is that which imparts to man self-movement and, with this motion, life. In another, it may appear as a member of a threefold division: body, soul, reason ( $\phiύσις$ ,  $\psiχή = πνευμάτιον$ ,  $\lambdaόγος = \etaγεμονικόν$ ), which corresponds to the Platonic-Aristotelian differentiation into the vegetative, sensitive, and rational faculties of the soul. In still another way, the soul may denote the "chief portion of the soul," namely, reason. Finally, the soul may signify a collective name for its functions taken in their entirety and in their actions in unison. The soul is, however, always *pneuma*, and as such it is composed of fire and of air. In such a view it is a body, as Zeno and Cleanthes had unanimously agreed (Arnim, *op. cit.*, I, 38, 14; 117, 14). In spite of its materiality, it does not have its seat in any one part of the body. It was thought to pervade the whole body and only by way of exception can it be said to be found in the heart, or, insofar as it is a rational soul, in the head. Among the Stoics there prevailed that same inconsistency in regard to the soul that we had detected both in Plato and Aristotle: on the one hand it is something material and on the other, not; on the one hand it is sensory and on the other, spiritual. On one occasion it is said that it can be divided into parts and on another that it cannot, because it is unitary or whole; it is essentially different from the body and yet is conceived to bestow life on the body and thus become merged into a living unity. As was true with them, so also with the Stoics it was held, and this is basic for their entire ethical philosophy, that the rational soul should prevail and predominate in man. For this reason it was given the name, "leading (guiding) soul" ( $\etaγεμονικόν$ ).

**Impulses.** 1) *Ignoble affections.* The central doctrine of Stoic

anthropology was its teaching concerning the "drives" or impulses (*impetus*). In itself the impetus ( $\delta\rhoμη$ ) belongs to the sensory soul. In it, however, are active the body, the senses, and reason. Insofar as the body is concerned, man receives representations through sensation and these in turn give rise to the impulses automatically and spontaneously. For this reason an impulse means "to suffer," "to be affected"; it is an "affection" (*pathos*) or passion. Expressed more precisely, only the excessive or violent impulse is an affection or an emotion. That an impulse becomes excessive is due to the fact that reason no longer accompanies and controls it. For reason plays a part in the impulse; in fact, the Stoics oftentimes delineate its role in such a way that it would appear that the affections are actually judgments. According to Zeno, the emotions follow upon judgments; Chrysippus identifies them with judgments. When reason restrains the emotions, so that the movements of the soul which are present in every impulse are well ordered and man thereby becomes a copy of the macrocosm, a microcosm governed by reason as is a macrocosm, we then have the "will" which is always a rational impulse—an assumption which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages. In this sense even Kant distinguished between an inferior conative or appetitive faculty, which can only be affected, and a superior conative or appetitive faculty, which is practical reason that can determine itself, if it so chooses.

Ever so often, however, the guiding portion of the soul fails to perform its function and the impulse is thrown back upon itself. Then we are confronted with the antithesis of reason, namely, folly, which is always a false representation and a falsehood. Pain, fear, desires, and lusts are forms of such folly, "distortions of reason." Practical as the Stoics always were, they realized that it was these novel, thoughtless impressions and representations that led to such false judgments, and for this reason they termed passion a "vigorous folly." Pain, for example, is a "vigorous folly" caused by the presence of evil; lust, a "vigorous folly" aroused by the presence of a good. It should be our task to overcome the narrowness of the present moment and to aid objective truth to achieve victory. Our *hege-monicon* or ruling faculty is, of course, always free. It can give or refuse its consent. In either of two ways reason can accomplish this task. The first way is to stall or to gain time by permitting the "vigorous folly" to die down and thus to deprive it of its force. "The best antidote against danger is time" (Seneca, *De Ira*, II, 29).

We should then attempt to dissolve the false representations for the purpose of arriving at the true facts of the case. These representations are only "emotional judgments," judgments of affection, as we would say today. "Wipe out the imagination," as Marcus Aurelius would say (*Meditations*, VII, 29; in Whitney J. Oates [ed.], *The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers* [New York: Random House, 1940], p. 538). Only in this way shall we be able to find peace of heart. Regarding physical evil and suffering the Stoics were of the opinion that only prejudices and imaginations rob us of peace. "What disturbs men's minds is not events, but their judgments on events. For instance, death is nothing dreadful, or else Socrates would have thought it so. No, the only dreadful thing about it is men's judgment that it is dreadful" (*Epictetus, Manual*, V; ed. Oates, p. 469). The truly wise man is above such weakness. In such a man reason alone rules and it makes him independent, objective, and faithful.

The life value of such views is clearly evident. They are *philosophia perennis*. In our customary way we caution a person who is in the grip of emotion, "Be reasonable." In such words a portion of ancient, especially Stoic, psychology lives on.

2) *Noble affections.* Over against the emotions understood as passions, the Stoics arrayed the nobler emotions: the opposite to desire is the upright will which in one respect may be either sheer well-wishing or simple sentiment; to fear, prudence which is divided into reverence and chastity; and to pleasure, the pure joy which springs from the consciousness of a virtuous life. In this division we can readily see how strongly Stoic psychology was guided by ethical interests. Here it appears as a doctrine of virtue. A similar tendency is evident in Spinoza, who views the affections from the standpoint of the Stoics; he also sought to heal them in a proper manner and, like them, placed the noble, his "active emotions," over against the ignoble emotions.

3) *The immortality of the soul.* The philosophy of antiquity, whose concept of man was turned to good account by the Stoics, generally treated of the problem of the immortality of the soul. At least the rational portion of the soul always appeared to them to be something eternal and something divine. In consonance with their materialism the Stoics were forced to embark upon another course and to adopt another view. Zeno conceded that the baser portion of the soul's matter was transitory and thus perishable; reason, on the contrary, as

the most tenuous kind of matter, could be immortal. Cleanthes and Chrysippus expressed themselves in like fashion; Panaetius, on the contrary, maintained without reserve that the soul was mortal. In any case, in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius we cannot find a trace of personal immortality. Poseidonius, on the other hand, borrowed—and this is also typical of the partial syncretism which can be observed in Stoicism—the Platonic proofs for the continued survival of the soul after death. In Seneca the immortality of the soul formed the basic dogma of his teaching. He chose language which appears to be almost Christian. “After the soul, purifying and divesting itself of the imperfections which it has acquired and of the sorrow of mortal life with which it has been afflicted, has tarried for a while above us, it ascends to the heights of the universe and hovers among the blessed spirits. The blessed company receives it among its own” (*Ad Marciam*, 25). His thoughts on the immortality of the soul are frequently cited by the Fathers of the Church. Against this general anthropological background, the true ethics of the Stoics at last makes its appearance.

## 2. THE PROBLEM OF AN ETHICAL PRINCIPLE

**Formulas for the *telos*.** The first problem is that of principles. In what does moral good consist? To answer this question, Cleanthes evolved the notion of a life lived in conformity with nature (ὅμολογονμένως τῇ φύσει ξῆν). This norm is usually designated as the goal of life (*τέλος, finis*). Another formula runs: Good is whatever is due a thing or whatever is fitting (*καθῆκον, officium*). Since man is a rational being, the “kathekon” is for all “a well-reasoned act that is suited to man’s rational nature.” This and the other explanations: Virtue is right reason (*όρθος λόγος, ratio recta*) or Virtue is prudence (moral insight) are practically all only formal frameworks for definitions which remain empty of meaning as long as we do not know what the content of human nature or of right reason is or what is denoted by these terms.

**Oikeiosis or true self-love.** The Stoics recognized the problem and sought to solve it by describing the basic goods of nature (*πρῶτα κατὰ φύσιν*). These are derived from the notion of *oikeiosis* or true self-love (literally, “appropriation”) to which Zeno attributed a unique property, which is extremely typical of the Stoics and by which the school was characterized for its entire existence. What we find in Theophrastus reminds us only slightly of this notion, for it does

not demonstrate what is essential to it, namely its naturalistic quality.

The basic motif of this notion is the tendency to derive the ethical norms from the primitive urge of human nature, that is to say, from its orientation to the personal ego which arises from the sensory perception of self. In this self-perception, which unfolds into self-relationship, we sense the ego as "something belonging to us." From this the *oikeiosis* is expanded to include our relations, the political community of which we are a part, and finally mankind itself; in fact it stretches out to embrace everything that preserves and protects the ego and its expansion into the community, everything that promotes the useful and wards off the harmful. *Oikeiosis* is therefore an appropriation or a dedication.

In contrast to this attempt to lay a foundation for ethics and its values, the Stoics restrict the *telos* (the idea of finality) in terms of their own notion of the *logos*, or reason operating in the world, so that even in this respect the frame (which we have already mentioned) is not filled with the desired ideal. One thing becomes clear: Human nature of which the Stoics speak is not that *oikeion* or ideal of which Platonic ethics treated; it is also not that human nature which Aristotle attempted to describe and which he likewise idealized. Human nature is understood by the Stoics in a purely natural sense as something which originates in the *oikeiosis*, springing from the sensory perception of self. During the era of the younger Stoics, the author of the *Commentary on the Theaetetus* stressed very definitely the fact that the oft-mentioned principle of self-love or *oikeiosis* was only something "physical" and not a transcendent principle (5, 14; 5, 36).

The notion of the *kathekon* (the suitable) also points to a naturalistic explanation of human nature, for among both animals and plants we find that the notion of something due or something fitting may also be verified (Diog. Laert., VII, 107). The laying of the cornerstone of morality is accomplished, therefore, from the standpoint of being which in this context must be understood in the light of a sensualistic naïve realism. The tendency to base ethics on metaphysics and nature during the entire Middle Ages and modern period—a movement easily seen in Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, by whom the influence of this view of ethics was spread throughout the Middle Ages—is less Aristotelian than Stoic. Circumstances and relationships in ethics are much the same as those which we have already established for the theory of knowledge (p. 219).

**Katorthoma (right action) and duty.** There appears to be one notion which seemingly transcends a naturalistic foundation for morality, namely, the notion of a truly right moral action (*κατόρθωμα*, "that which is done rightly"). In this notion the concept of duty which is already contained in the *kathekon* or the suitable obviously obtrudes itself in its purest form. A person who performs an act which, viewed realistically, is right, but which happens to strike the correct norm of righteousness perhaps only by chance or by reason of a positive inclination, does not possess moral perfection. Only he who does good precisely for the reason that he thinks it "should be done," because it is his duty to do so, can be said to be perfect. By this concept we gradually approach the ideal normative character of morality. This concept was what Kant treasured so highly in Stoic ethics, and because of it we are accustomed to label Stoic ethics in a traditional fashion as an ethics of duty. Stoic ethics is, however, not solely an ethics of duty, because the *kathekon* from which the *katorthoma* (right action) is derived is a view of reality and does not imply that antithesis between being and value which is characteristic of the ethics of modern times, ever since Kant widened the breach between theoretical and practical reason, ascribing being to the former and duty ("the should") and values to the latter. Consequently the ethics of the Stoics is essentially an ethics of being. Its ethics does, however, emphatically stress the element of duty, as we are accustomed to say. It would, however, be better to describe Stoic ethics as one of interior dispositions grounded on objective reality, an ethics that is simultaneously one of inwardness and of being. Better than in theory we can arrive at a just appreciation of the genuine moral profundity of Stoic ethics by a scrutiny of its practical precepts. Seneca demands: "You must live for another, if you want to live for yourself" (*Ep.*, 48, 2). Epictetus maintains: "I hold it to be better to do as God wills and not as I will; I seek to be subject to Him as a servant and disciple are to their masters; I will try to conform myself to Him both in my intentions and in my actions" (*Dissert.*, IV, 5). Marcus Aurelius exclaims: "Everything harmonizes with me which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early nor too late, which is in due time for thee" (*Med.*, IV, 23; ed. Oates, p. 511). Here we sense very clearly genuine ethical resignation.

**Natural law and humanitarianism.** 1) "Divine law." One of the noblest fruits of Stoic ethics is the concept of the natural law and

the ideal of humanitarianism associated with it. The positive law formulated by states or by governments is neither unique nor omnipotent. This law derives its validity ultimately from an unwritten, eternal law which serves at the same time as the norm for all positive laws, from the natural law which is nothing else than the universal cosmic law identical with cosmic reason. This conviction is numbered among the unshakable dogmas of the Stoic school. Even Cicero and Philodemus reaffirmed in a similar strain what had been established by the founders of the school. Zeno, in one of his famous dicta, exclaimed: "The natural law is a divine law and as such possesses the power to regulate what is right and what is wrong" (Arnim, *op. cit.*, I, 42, 35). Chrysippus, in one of his utterances, declared: "Zeus, the common nature of all things, and necessity are all one; and this is also justice, unity, and peace" (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 315, 8 ff.). In the background stands Heraclitus with his pronouncement: "All human laws are nourished by the divine" (Frag. 114). Even Plato with his world of ideas and Aristotle belong to this group. Aristotle expressly distinguished between the positive law and the law of nature and quoted in defense of its power and validity a verse from Sophocles' *Antigone* which runs something like the following: "Not of today or yesterday it is,—but lives eternal; none can date its birth" (Aristotle, *Rhet.*, 1373 b 12; ed. McKeon, p. 1370). The Stoic was of the opinion that the law of nature is self-evident. It is present with reason as such. "Whoever possesses it has with it also knowledge, a conscience to decide what is right and what is not. To him upon whom nature bestows reason, to him right reason is also given; consequently, also the law; and if the law then also the right" (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 78, 27).

2) *Universal Reason*. The law of nature rests essentially upon the notion of the Universal Reason (*κοινὸς λόγος*). Since we, as members of the human race, share in it, we can conclude that all men are like one another, all possess the same rights and laws. They must as a consequence act accordingly: "Slave will you not bear with your own brother who has Zeus for his forefather, and is born as a son of the same seed as you are, the same heavenly descent" (Epictetus, *Discourses*; ed. Oates, pp. 249-250). The native land of the Stoic is the whole world. He felt himself to be a cosmopolite. For this reason the Stoics bound their disciples to practice universal charity, benevolence, mildness, and patience. In Seneca we find this precept incorporated into the titles of his books; and Marcus Aurelius repeatedly urged

like-minded men to think and to act humanely. In behalf of members of different races as well as of slaves, women, and children who had been much discriminated against in Roman law, the Stoics raise the plea for equal justice.

3) *Stoicism and Roman jurisprudence.* Once Stoicism became indigenous to the Roman Empire, legal concepts slowly began to change. Roman jurists such as Gaius, Ulpian, and Marcius introduced postulates of the natural law into their presentation of justice and extolled them as ideal norms for the interpretation of positive laws. The natural law is also made the foundation of international law. A whole series of emperors sympathetic to Stoicism drew certain conclusions from the Stoic concept of law and of justice and gave them definite formulation. Whereas in Roman jurisprudence women were ruled incapable of possessing rights, Augustus abrogated guardianship at least for widows with children. Slaves were originally treated as "tools or implements"; under Nero, however, police regulations were enacted which protected slaves against the brutality of their masters. Hadrian punished by law masters who murdered their slaves. Antoninus Pius bestowed upon them the right to flee to the sanctuaries of the gods for haven. Marcus Aurelius forbade gladiatorial games. In the third century of the Christian era, slaves of the state were empowered to dispose of half of their fortunes by last will and testament. And in the fourth century after Christ, humanitarianism had progressed so far that slaves were accorded the right to cite their masters before the civil courts. The concept of a universal law that was synonymous with human nature itself ennobled human life immeasurably. For this reason we may label Stoic natural law as humanistic.

4) *Stoicism and Christianity.* Logically the Stoics reckoned man's relationship to God among the prescriptions of the natural law. One and the same Universal Reason binds them together. On the other hand, an animal cannot be considered as the subject of rights, since it does not share in this *Logos* or Reason. Both concepts lived on in the formulas by which Christianity presented its moral teachings, just as the ethos of duty, right, and humanity afforded a common ground upon which Christianity could come into contact with Stoicism. The Fathers of the Church could study points of agreement to be found in Stoic teachings and could both evaluate and quote them. The spiritual affinity that was thus revealed in these Stoic ideals appears to have been so very intimate that there grew up

definite legends concerning a correspondence supposedly carried on between Seneca and St. Paul. These pious tales were still given credence late in the Middle Ages.

**Eudaemonism.** In a life lived in conformity with nature and regulated by law and reason, man finds his happiness. The Stoic morality wears the garments of eudaemonistic terminology, but only the garment, for its content is worlds apart from it. True and lasting happiness must be sought in virtue. Virtue is fidelity to law, consciousness of one's obligations, self-restraint, mortification, unrelenting severity, and harshness toward oneself. In such deportment we cannot detect any yearning, pleasure, desire, or lust, nor any speculation on personal aggrandizement or personal welfare. The *oikeiosis*, or concept of true self-love, the basic element of Stoic ethics, counsels the individual to turn in upon himself. By so doing he will discover life's various purposes, the goals for living. For this reason the interior man and his relationships to the eternal law are carefully examined. With these goals man should be satisfied and should be self-sufficient. The Stoics, as the Cynics before them, favored the ideal of "autarchy." Material goods as well as material physical evil are of no importance (*Adiaphora*). Praise and blame, pleasure and pain, riches and poverty, health and sickness, even life and death, should be matters of indifference. These loom large in the imagination and prejudices of men either as values or futilities, but in reality they are not. The virtuous renounce them, in fact, they can even renounce life itself—a course which the Stoics frequently adopted.

Among the Stoics, man's purpose in life is conceived differently than among the Epicureans. With them it was not pleasure that shows man the path he should follow; rather, it is the objective meaning of the natural order. If it were true that pleasure was the mechanism for acts either of omission or of commission, the Stoics would attack the Epicureans by saying: If this were true, children would never learn to walk, because while learning they fall frequently and most certainly hurt themselves. But we know that they do not give up the attempt until they finally walk by themselves. So there must be another "drive," some other impulse than pleasure that is the mainspring of actions.

The Stoics differed also from Aristotle. He also had rejected pleasure as the principle of the good and saw in it only a concomitant phenomenon of the good and of life. He had, nevertheless, ultimately accepted it and had in addition listed material goods among the

factors that contribute to happiness. The Stoics were of sterner stuff. In their view the virtuous life did not need these even as concomitant phenomena: they found their happiness without them.

### 3. PRACTICAL TEACHING ON VIRTUES

The Stoics were convinced that theory alone was not sufficient. They reproached the Peripatetics because they esteemed the theoretical contemplative life above practical actions. In pursuance of their own doctrine, the Stoics did not linger long over the discussion of the ethical problems connected with principles; rather, they stressed a practical doctrine of virtue. Two basic postulates are emphasized.

**The active life.** 1) *A man of determination.* The first postulate dealt with the active life. The Stoic was a man of will, of will power. He loved self-exertion and strict discipline (training rules), especially contests and actual battle, the "Socratic Vigor," and the *ponos* (tug of war) of the Cynics. For this reason Diogenes and Hercules were held up as models for imitation. The way to virtue is not the broad road of the indolent, but rather the narrow path of the resolute.

Although the Stoics employed the language of intellectualism in their doctrine of virtue — virtue is right reason; there is in fact only one virtue and this consists in moral insight (*phronesis*) or prudence — they were less interested in the essence and the contemplation of spiritual ideals and backgrounds than were the enlightened members of the Peripatos and still less than those of the Academy. Here again we must distinguish between a word and the reality denoted by it. Despite the language of intellectualism, virtue itself was not intellectualized. The Stoic was a realist and knew what was important for a practical life: "a powerful approach and a resolute dealing." "Deny and bear" (*ἀνέχον καὶ ἀπέχον, sustine et abstine*) offers him his motive for a virtuous life. He could also say: Where there is a will there is a way. "What do we need? What reduces everything to order? The will. What saves man from hunger, the rope and the abyss? The will. Is there anything stronger in man?" (Epictetus, *Discourses*, Book II, c. xvii.) Philosophy does not consist in words and theorems, but in life and in action: "On no occasion call yourself a philosopher, nor talk at large of your principles among the multitude, but act on your principles. For instance, at a banquet do not say how one ought to eat, but eat as you ought" (Epictetus, *The Manual*; ed. Oates, p. 481). The concrete and practical recipe which contains everything that is needed is proposed by Seneca: "Whoeve-

is happily occupied has not time to become involved in foolishness; work is the surest means of banishing the vice of slothfulness" (*Ep.*, 56).

2) *The man of character.* Since the Stoic was a man of will, of will power, he was also a man of character. The logical consequences of his essence and of his actions were considered as bulking largely among his chief duties. We can detect this refrain in the moral formula for a goal (end) as it had been enunciated by the founder of the school: "To live in concord" (*διολογουμένως ζῆν*). The later disciples stressed it still more emphatically: "Before all else see to it that you always remain the same" (Seneca, *Ep.*, 35); and "he lays aside all distracting and busy pursuits, and desires nothing else than to accomplish the straight course through the law, and by accomplishing the straight course to follow God" (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, X, 11; ed. Oates, p. 565). Precisely for this reason he rejected sorrow or contrition. "The wise man never repents his actions; he never changes what he has done; he never alters his resolutions" (Seneca, *De benef.*, IV, 34).

3) *The man of politics.* The best opportunity for such an active life opens to us in our participation in public life. The Stoic could not, if he wished to be virtuous, isolate himself, but he had to throw himself into the hustle and bustle of the active life. On this point he was animated, by way of exception, by different sentiments than the Cynic, who remained in this respect an individualist, and also different from the Epicurean who followed the principle: "Live in retirement." The Stoic appreciated the fact that man was a social being, that even when he seeks himself he must seek others, since there is only one Logos which adapts itself both to him and to his fellow beings. As a consequence, he cannot lead a private life of comfort, but must necessarily plunge into the activity of a public life and in it fulfill his obligations.

A witness of unimpeachable value for this characteristic attitude of the Stoics is found in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius: "In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present—I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bed-clothes and keep myself warm? — But this is more pleasant.—Dost thou exist then to take thy pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion? Dost thou not see the little plants, the little

birds, the ants, the spiders, the bees working together to put in order their several parts of the universe? And art thou unwilling to do the work of a human being, and dost thou make haste to do what is according to thy nature?" (*Meditations*, V, c. 1; ed. Oates, p. 517). In this statement of the Emperor we can readily see that Stoicism was a philosophy most in consonance with the political aspirations of an empire. And not only in the Roman Empire. Frederick II of Prussia waxed enthusiastic about these men of law, of deed, of decision, and of trustworthiness and by personal preference he tried to make Cicero's volume, *De Officiis*, which is actually a Latin revision of Panaetius' work *On Duty*, the groundwork of instruction on morality within his kingdom.

**Apathy.** The second constantly recurring stipulation of Stoic doctrine on virtue was the admonition to cultivate apathy. This is a presupposition for the first. In order that the way of virtue and of deeds in accordance with nature might not in any way be impeded, the affections (emotions) must be brought into subjection. The Stoic was a man of sentiment and was not unaware of the siren call of pleasure, and of the reluctance caused by aversion. But he did not permit himself to be overpowered by his passions. "Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of water around it" (*Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*, IV, 49; ed. Oates, p. 515). Inordinate desire, anger, and fear should not gain the upper hand; neither should compassion or sorrow. The highest faculty of the soul, reason alone, should seek to express itself; not the emotions: "This is the chief thing: 'Be not perturbed.'" Then Marcus Aurelius immediately offers a reason for this advice: "For all things are according to the nature of the universal; and in a little time thou wilt be nobody and nowhere, like Hadrian and Augustus" (*Meditations*, VIII, 5; ed. Oates, p. 544). The study of the whole cannot help but make us great; study of law and of necessity, strong and unshakable. It is the Stoic ideal of apathy which Horace extols in an heroic fashion in his famous verse: "*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum feriunt ruinae*"; that is to say: "Yea, if the globe should fall, he'll stand serene amidst the crash" (Horace, *Carmina*, III, 3). Epictetus, however, depicts it in a fashion more in conformity with his simple communion with life and consequently in its true fruitfulness: "Remember that you must behave in life as you would at a banquet. A dish is handed around and comes to you; put out your hand and take it politely. It passes you; do not

stop it. It has not reached you; do not be impatient to get it, but wait until your turn comes. Bear yourself thus towards children, wife, office, wealth, and one day you will be worthy to banquet with the gods. But if when they are set before you, you do not take them but despise them, then you shall not only share the gods' banquet, but shall share their rule. For by so doing Diogenes and Hercules and men like them were called divine and deserved the name" (*The Manual*, 15; ed. Oates, pp. 471-472). By their teaching on the subject of apathy, the Stoics sharply differentiated themselves from the Peripatetics. They are much more severe. "Our philosophers suppress the emotions," says Seneca, "whereas the Peripatetics only temper theirs" (*Ep.*, 116).

**The wise man.** The notion which affords us a summary of the teaching of the Stoics on virtue is the ideal of a truly wise man. The wise man is praised with rapturous pathos. Such a person possesses all virtues and acts always rightfully and correctly. He is truly brave and he is also truly happy. He alone is rich, independent, and handsome. He is set apart from Zeus only because he is not immortal, whereas Zeus is. We are advised that the truly wise man is a rarity, as rare as the phoenix which appears in the world only every five hundred years. Just as in the earlier schools after Socrates, so also in this school the concepts of wisdom and of moral insight or prudence are employed to express virtuous sentiments. This usage has its basis in the fact that the Greek language supplied words that admitted such a meaning, and also that the moral order was also an order of reason. If law that is standard equally for the world and for man is derived from the Universal Reason, the man who acts in accordance with his nature acts reasonably or "rationally" and "prudently" and "wisely." This need not be considered intellectualism; it was never so among the Stoics. We have already emphasized the importance of the will for the guidance of moral life, as this was outlined by the Stoics. The best explanation of it that can be found anywhere is that which is advanced by Seneca: "What is wisdom? Always wishing the same thing and not wishing it" (*Ep.*, 20). In this citation we have proof that in philosophy it is not words but notions that are important.

#### 4. FATE AND FREEDOM

**Freedom and causality.** By the same token, the wise man is also truly free. In this statement we touch upon one of the most remark-

able paradoxes of the Stoics. With it the ancients busied themselves. On the one hand freedom is defined in all its manifestations. By it was meant, however, the freedom of the inner man, that is, the man of reason. This freedom is precisely determined. Everything that is connected with the material world, with the body and its affections, the ailments of the soul, are only so many chains for man himself. We are, however, masters of our representations. They need our consent (*συγκατάθεσις*), and this is always in our power to give (*ἐφ' ἡμῖν*, "within us") (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 283, 27). Through the *synkatathesis* or consent we know that freedom can exist (*προαιρεσις*, *liberum arbitrium*). By it we can adopt or reject, we can decide whether we are in favor of or against the law; by it we can choose between good or evil.

There are two different kinds of causes: those which are at the beginning of every process and denote a mere impulse (*προκαταρκτικά*); and those which are capable of generating from their very essence a process complete and entire (*αὐτοτελεῖς*). Of this last species is the *synkatathesis* or consent (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 291, 21 ff.; 292, 1 ff.). For this reason Marcus Aurelius thought: "That which rules within (i.e., the spirit or soul) makes a material for itself out of that which is opposed to it, as fire lays hold of what falls into it, by which a small light would have been extinguished; but when the fire is strong, it soon appropriates to itself the matter which is heaped on it, and consumes it, and rises higher by means of this very material" (*Meditations*, IV, 1; ed. Oates, p. 508). Epictetus gives us even more particulars: "You have the faculty of being moved in your senses and your intelligence by countless objects, sometimes assenting, sometimes rejecting, sometimes doubting; you guard in your own mind these many impressions derived from so many and various objects" (*Discourses*, I, 14; ed. Oates, p. 250). All these are bestowed upon us by the gods and they belong to us. Over these we possess mastery in contrast to material realities, by which we are of necessity hindered (*Discourses*, I, 1, 7-13); or, as he puts it, "burdened by them and dragged down." In view of such expressions, philosophers such as Barth have been wont to speak of the omnipotence of the mind which the Stoics are supposed to have taught.

**Fate.** On the other side stands fate. The Stoic was a fatalist. And the omnipotence of fate is not any less vividly described than the omnipotence of the mind. Fate is "the law of the cosmos, according to which all things have taken place, are to take place, and all futur-

things will transpire" (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 264). This fate is an unconquerable, irresistible, unavoidable cause (*ibid.*, 292, 15) — in fact it is a whole series of causes (*ibid.*, 293, 22 ff.; 305, 29); it is cosmic reason, the Universal Reason or Logos (*ibid.*, 264, 18; 265, 27; I, 24, 31; 42, 24). It is one and the same thing, whether I speak of an eternal series of causes, of a cosmic law or a law of nature, of fate or of providence or of Zeus.

**Conflict.** Through such a concept there results an insurmountable difficulty, namely, the conflict between freedom and necessity. We need only keep before our eyes the development of the Stoic formula for *telos* to be able to recognize this. In his writings, Zeno demanded that we "live in concord." This could still be reconciled with the concept of freedom: we could freely choose the means by which we hoped to regulate our lives and remain true to them. But in Cleanthes there is an addition made to this: we must live in accord "with nature." If we could understand "nature" in this instance as an ideal goal in the meaning of a teleological ethics, let us say after the fashion of Aristotle, we could still hold fast to the concept of freedom. But to live in accord with nature, as propounded by the Stoics, has its origin in the *oikeiosis* and this is only a natural impulse, as we have already seen. If, to exhaust the subject, we should study the third stage of the development of the *telos* formula as advanced by Chrysippus, we may ask ourselves whether reason has a place any longer. By nature he did not understand individual human nature but universal nature which is identical with cosmic reason, because the individual soul is synonymous with cosmic reason — this cosmic reason is nothing more than the eternal, unchanging cosmic law. What purpose does it serve for Chrysippus to assure us that only in the material world do necessity and fate rule, whereas the impulse to form our own resolutions derives from our wills (Arnim, *op. cit.*, II, 294, 21), if our Logos is nevertheless identical with the eternal, unchanging Universal Logos or Reason? There is no doubt, as Pohlenz so clearly states, that the Stoics included in the "causal nexus of the *heimarmene* [fate] the interior life of the soul."

Viewed from the standpoint of their opponents, such as Plutarch, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Nemesius, and Chalcidius, it is customary to point out that fate disposes of the apparent freedom of man. For if we should be perfectly free only when we remained entirely uninfluenced by external causes, then an external influence on our conative faculty and the phantasy is acknowledged, namely, in those

instances of imperfect freedom. And according to the law of causality, like causes will always produce like effects, so that freedom, even that of the interior man, would be subjected to fate (*ibid.*, 290, 24 ff.; 291, 4). The fact of manticism (divinization and prophecy) is also a negation of freedom. Only because everything has been predestined beforehand is it possible to predict future events, so that manticism proves that "acts of our interior life simply put into execution what has already been decreed, when we act as the result of the providential arrangements of fate" (*ibid.*, 272, 25).

The problem is not in any way simplified by attempting to show that Chrysippus sought to preserve freedom by retaining responsibility. After he has formed his own character, the wise man, or respectively the fool, cannot act in any other way than in the way his character prescribes. But that a wise man became what he is now, is something that we must ascribe to his own merits, and in the case of the fool, to his own guilt. At one time it was in his power to become either what he is now or something else. For this reason and to this extent men are responsible for their actions; and for the same reason and to an equal degree there exist such realities as praise and blame. By proposing this solution, the Stoics removed the problem only one step farther from eventual solution. The question is, precisely, whether or not in a universal series of causes it would have been possible for an individual to have developed his natural dispositions in this way or in some other than he actually did. Stoic responsibility is forced or extorted; that is to say, it is no responsibility at all. For this reason praise and blame, admiration and warning, punishment and honors, cannot be rescued from oblivion. Just as many other terms drawn from traditional philosophy, so also these words have lost their original meaning for the Stoics. In fact, they had to lose them in this new context.

**Attempts at a solution.** The Stoic believed he could resolve the conflict by changing the meaning of freedom. In reality, for him freedom is synonymous with necessity. Only the fool wishes for something other than that which must be. The wise man, on the contrary, recognizes in the lawful character of events something peculiar to them, a lawfulness typically their own. He looks for nothing else and consequently assents to his own fate. Any other will-act on his part would be sheer caprice and as such only a manifestation of the affections of passion and of disorderliness. But

the man of passion lacks liberty; he is the slave of his impulses. He is in fact truly ill. The wise man who has been healed of his infirmities by philosophy, from the very fact that by it reason in him has resumed its rightful sway, is in no way capable of being harmed by the necessity of fate but extends to it a hearty welcome. Philosophy, the medicine of the soul as Cicero terms it, retracing the steps of the Stoics (*Tus.*, III, 1), has helped man to accept, as a matter of course, the provisions of fate, as he would accept, as a matter of course, his own bodily growth and maturity as purely natural.

But this solution is only apparent, for only the ideal will is synonymous with the necessity of the cosmic law. The actual, psycho-physical will of man, who exists in the measurement of time and the dimensions of space, can and must act differently if the command to do good and to avoid evil is to have any meaning. According to Stoic physics, however, even this will cannot act other than it actually does at any given time. In such a conception all ethical imperatives become illusory. If we should wish to do justice to this problem, we would have to bear in mind that in the background lies hidden a typical but specific characteristic of Stoic philosophy which is in accordance with its materialism. The Stoic conceived of the cosmic law always as a natural law and in conjunction with it had never lost sight of the material world. The fact that the historical, the purely human, and the ethical are each governed by their own peculiar and special laws utterly escapes him. From this there arise all those difficulties which we can still detect in Boethius, when in his work *The Consolation of Philosophy* he treats of the problems of fate, providence, and freedom. What makes it difficult for him to pave a way for freedom is the Stoic interpretation of cosmic law and causality.

Over the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius there broods a tired resignation. The fulfillment of his duties is noble; his endurance, heroic. But the whole is without hope and without meaning. Among the younger Stoics one has the feeling that the ethos of necessity serves as a kind of narcotic to lull them to sleep; by it they sought to strengthen themselves against a mood of hopelessness which pervaded their environment because the culture of which they were a part was about to disappear. Man continues to play his part and will play it with decency to the very end. But he is, as it were, crippled and incapable of any creative work. He accepts what happens

to him and he consoles himself with the thought that it must happen just as it does. It was not by accident that the famed phrase of Seneca was placed at the end of Spengler's book, *The Decline of the West*: "If you consent, fate guides you; if you do not, it forces you" (*Ep.*, 107, 11).

# CHAPTER 11

## EPICUREANS, ACADEMICIANS, AND PERIPATETICS

### I. EPICUREANISM: AN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

#### THE PHILOSOPHERS OF EPICUREANISM

The Epicureans were hereditary foes of the Stoics. The polemic between them was carried on endlessly. The founder of the school was Epicurus of Samos (341-270 B.C.). His teacher was Nausiphanes, the Democritean. The atomistic ancestry of Epicureanism is one of its hallmarks. Epicurus began his lectures to a group in his own garden in Athens in 302 B.C. Because of its origin in the garden, the pupils of the school were called "those from the garden" (*οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν κήπων*). The personage of the founder molded the school more than did either the method which was followed or the dogma which was taught. Epicurus was a sensitive soul, characterized by a refined and attractive personality. He was praised for his modesty, his mildness, his goodness, and for his lofty concept of friendship. His utterances were considered as so many dogmas. Of his writings, of which there were supposed to be more than three hundred, only a few fragments remain.

Among other renowned scholars of this school we might mention a close contemporary, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, who ponderously elaborated the doctrine of pleasure. In the second half of the second century before Christ, we must make allusion to Apollodorus, a prolific writer, who was popularly known as the "tyrant of the garden"; Zeno of Sidon and Phaedrus, whose lectures were attended by Cicero, who thought highly of them; Siron, the teacher of Virgil; and Philodemus of Gadara, a considerable number of whose writings were discovered in Herculaneum.

The most informative source for a knowledge of Epicureanism is

Lucretius Carus (96-55 B.C.). His didactic poem, *On Nature*, purposed to delineate literally the resurgence of Democritean atomism through Epicurus. He was an enthusiastic disciple. In his enthusiasm he breaks into rhapsody: "Ornament of the Grecian people, upon whom thou as a brilliant light didst cast thy beam when they groveled in deepest darkness, and who hast delineated for us the beauty of life. Thee I follow step by step not indeed to master Thee, but solely to imitate Thee from sentiments of deepest love and veneration" (*De Rer. Nat.*, III, 1).

Through Lucretius, Greek philosophy was again transplanted to Rome. Epicureanism was the kind of speculation which could be appreciated to the full by that race of men, this time in its most finished products, the circles around Virgil, Maecenus, Horace, and Augustus. But it was not only Rome that benefited from the zeal of Lucretius for atomism, but also modern philosophy which has drawn upon it for much source material. By this we think chiefly of Gassendi, the precursor of modern atomism, and of his more rabid followers. In this historical fact another arch which connects antiquity with the modern era is brought to completion.

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In Epicureanism, philosophy is again divided into logic, physics, and ethics. In this division, ethics signifies the goal of the entire system.

## LOGIC

### 1. SOURCE AND MEANING OF KNOWLEDGE

**Usefulness.** Logic is also called "canonics," because it is supposed to furnish us with standards of true knowledge. Among the Epi-

cureans we cannot find, as we did in Aristotle, that high regard for knowledge for its own sake. With them knowledge is placed entirely at the service of utility. Sheer intuition of the truth, the *θεωρία τῆς ἀληθείας*, is considered superfluous. For this reason the Epicureans defined philosophy as that activity by which knowledge ought to produce happiness. This view of philosophy would make even the avowed realists, the Stoics, appear to be most theoretical and to exhibit decided theoretical tendencies.

**Sensualism.** In addition to their efforts at establishing the goal or purpose of knowledge, the Epicurean philosophers also sought to offer mankind an explanation of its true nature. According to the Epicureans, all knowledge is sheer sense perception, nothing more. We possess knowledge simply because miniature images (*εἰδώλα*) detach themselves from objects and stream into the sense organs. In such a concept the first thing we naturally think of is the sensation of sight. In other instances, however, the same phenomenon holds true. The other senses are also set in motion by such influxus from without (*ρεύματα*). Objects continuously send forth waves of such images. In this do ordinary sense perception and sensation consist and in it also the guarantee of their reality is actually perceived. These uninterrupted waves are responsible for the impressions of thickness and solidity, and also those of corporeal reality. Miniature images which are outside this continuous emission are as tenuous as cobwebs. Behind them there is no reality. Furthermore, these tenuous images do not enter through the organs of the ~~senses~~ but through the pores of the skin, forcing their way to the heart. These are the illusions of folly and the images of the imagination.

Sense perceptions of the kind we first described form our knowledge and exhaust all its possibilities. As a consequence, a notion, for example, is not a structural unit of logical validity, but only a remembrance of the common content of a representation, and is limited entirely to the realm of the senses, of associations and residues. Empedocles and Democritus had already described for us images which detached themselves from objects and poured into us. We must contrast these material *eidola* (images) with the ideal *eidos* (form) of Plato and Aristotle in order to be able to recognize how completely changed the Epicurean theory of knowledge has become. Epicureanism is sensationalism and materialism, as was its model, the atomism of Democritus, before it.

## 2. CRITERION OF TRUTH

**The truth of sensible reality.** When treating of true and false images, the Epicureans were naturally forced to look for a criterion which would assure them of the genuineness of their knowledge. If actual necessity had not forced them to perform this task, their opponents, the Stoics, would have driven them to it by their intensive discussion of the problem of evidence. Epicurus disposes of it with a reasonably facile pen. Sense perception, so he explained, would always be true. To the representations of the phantasy there correspond certain influences from without: "for they move the soul." This would mean that the veracity of each sense perception consists in the psychological reality of such perceptions, and only in them. The logical, ontological veracity of our knowledge depends upon something else, namely, upon our judgments and our opinions ( $\deltaόξa$ ,  $\iota\piόληψis$ ). Through these the possibility of error may arise. This is an assertion that Aristotle himself had made and in his works it had a very definite meaning, but here it is repeated only verbally and is no longer in conformity with the whole, i.e., with the whole theory. For in Aristotle the theory of knowledge presupposed still another norm which passed judgment on sensible reality, a norm that was however unknown to the Epicureans.

**A vicious circle.** When we are told that, in order to be sure of the truth of the judgments we have made, we must take into consideration whether or not reality confirms them or at least does not contradict them, this is only superficial prattle because it takes for granted what is actually questionable. If our knowledge is only a matter of the senses, and if sense perception is only a representation of the imagination, who can guarantee that that perception which should supervise other perceptions does not itself blunder? This would itself in turn need supervision, and so without end. The truth, however, which is ascribed to every sense perception avails us little, because it too is nothing more than psychical reality concerning which there is no dispute. Canonics is rather shabbily treated in the Epicurean system. The position of Epicurus in regard to the problem of truth, which is basic for every philosophical system, was carelessly taken and defended. Moreover, this carelessness is symptomatic of his entire speculation.

## PHYSICS

## 1. REVIVAL OF ATOMISM

**The ontology of atomism.** In metaphysics Epicurus and his school revived the atomism of Democritus. As with him, so also with the Epicureans, there are an infinite number of ultimate, indivisible, "solid" elements, the atoms. They possess no qualities and are differentiated from one another only quantitatively, by shape and by weight. They are not, however, absolutely different, for by reason of the similarities they possess we are able to speak of specific kinds. The number of these species is limited, but in each group are to be found an infinite number of atoms (*Lucretius, De Rer. Nat.*, II, 478 ff.; 522 ff.). For them we must assume empty space in which they exist and move. This space is without limits and without boundaries (*ibid.*, I, 951 ff.). By means of these two elements, body and space, the Epicureans were able to explain all being. Beings of another kind, that is, beings of a third kind, do not exist (*ibid.*, 430 ff.). This, of course, is patent materialism. The soul and the mind are also bodies; they are of the finest kind to be sure, but nonetheless they are matter. The soul is a part of the body as are the hands and the feet (*ibid.*, III, 94; 161 ff.). The soul is divisible and consequently as mortal as the body itself (*ibid.*, 417 ff.; 634 ff.). The atoms are eternal and will endure forever. Their total number will always remain constant (*ibid.*, II, 294 ff.). This proposition enunciates the law of the conservation of substance, always a basic dogma of materialism.

**Mechanist view of becoming.** Upon the ontology of atomism is based the explanation of becoming and with it the whole of the cosmic process. All becoming draws upon the already extant, infinite, and imperishable substance of matter. The first principle of cosmogony implicit in this new atomism is that "nothing can come from nothing and nothing can return to nothing" (*De Rer. Nat.*, I, 150 ff.; 216 ff.). All becoming is only a regrouping of the atoms. The atoms separate and then reunite, now in this fashion, now in another; they again separate and then enter into ever new combinations, and so continuously from one eternity to another. In a similar fashion we can explain all the forms of inanimate nature as well as life in its abundant richness, its species and its genera, ultimately mankind itself and its history. "For we realize that matter is not inextricably

bound together, when we see in nature how all things spring up in a never ending flood, and continuously renew themselves before our very eyes. . . . For everything that is taken from a body and, as a consequence, makes it matter, is added somewhere else to permit something else to mature, so that when one thing wilts, through this very wilting something else can take its place. In the end everything is taken away; nothing will remain. And so it is that the sum total of being is constantly being renewed. In this fashion mortals live out their fieflike existence, and their peonlike gift of life. Here one scion gains ascendancy; there another sinks into decline. Within brief periods the generation of breathing beings fluctuates, and just as speedy sprinters at the Olympic games, they pass the torch of life" (*ibid.*, II, 67 ff.). And what is the law that governs these changes? Only two things, so we are reassured, are responsible for this eternal motion: the weight of the atoms themselves, and the pressure and the impact of other atoms (*ibid.*, 84 ff.). This is patent mechanism and it is Democritean mechanism.

**Chance.** 1) *The declination.* But the master of the school is soon corrected and an entirely novel theory is proposed, the notion of *declinatio* (*παρέγκλισις*), i.e., the abrupt deviation of the atom from the straight line of descent. From all eternity the atoms in space sink slowly downward. Abruptly and of themselves, "we do not know when and we do not know why," the atoms deviate suddenly and slightly from the straight line of descent; there is "a slight swerving in the direction of their motion," and the atoms begin to react upon one another. Thus new combinations and constant exchanges are introduced. If we should not accept this *declinatio*, as Lucretius alleges against Democritus according to the teaching of Epicurus, creation could never have taken place (*De Rer. Nat.*, II, 216 ff.).

2) *Lack of causality.* The concept of *declinatio* denotes a strict concept of chance (accident) in the sense of a lack of causality. Cicero expressly clarified the Epicurean concept of chance (*τύχη, casu*) by saying that in the declination we are dealing with an event "without a cause" (Usener, *Epicurea*, p. 200). By such an explanation Epicurus introduced a novel concept into the history of philosophy. True, philosophy before his time had recognized the existence of chance, but Aristotle, for example, who urged that the notion be used with discretion, did not understand it in the meaning of a lack of causality. According to him, chance is a happening for which we are unable

momentarily to advance any good reasons, although some are present. Even the automaton of Democritus was not chance in the sense in which Epicurus understood it. His automaton indeed made unnecessary a cause which we might seek in the will and in the plans of autonomous human beings, because all becoming is made dependent entirely on the mass of the atom and consequently "takes place" of itself. In such an explanation it is evident that the automaton of Democritus is the exact antithesis of the Epicurean chance. His automaton denoted the strictest determination, both of being and of becoming within the mechanism of bodies, which, insofar as they are masses, can also be considered as forces or energies in which the laws of effect are the same as the laws of being, the laws of masses. The Stoics unjustifiably attributed the notion of chance advanced by the Epicureans to their forefathers, Leucippus and Democritus. Chance is an invention which is the exclusive property of the school of Epicurus. By their concept they did not correct Democritus; on the contrary, they lost utterly what had been so magnificent in his cosmogony: absolute conformity of the cosmic process with the laws of nature, and the possibility of predicting and of computing in advance future events which are based upon them. "He prodigally wasted his inheritance," says St. Augustine of Epicurus and of his concept of chance as put forth in his notion of declination (Usener, *op. cit.*, 201 f.). Could it be that Epicurus had not understood the concept of his master?

## 2. FIGHT AGAINST FATE

No, there is another factor which led him to adopt this viewpoint. In his concept of chance he had a special purpose in mind, namely, the liberation of man from both the pressure and the necessity of fate. The Epicureans advocated freedom of the will. If there were such a thing as fate as the Stoics taught it, freedom of the will would be utterly destroyed and there would hang over the life of man the sword, as it were, of Damocles, the sword of destiny. Such an ideology was impossible for the hedonist. Such a teaching would interfere with his enjoyment of life. For this reason Epicurus tried to preserve human freedom through the concept of chance understood as an effect without a cause. By such a concept man is elevated far above any series of causes; he can of himself and in a creative fashion initiate a series of causes of his own. He again becomes the captain of his life; and he can mold it as he pleases. Cicero expressly reports

that Epicurus introduced the declination simply to save human freedom, and in Lucretius we read the same thing: "That the spirit is not forced to follow the compulsion of its weight and overpowered by it to endure and to suffer—that such is not the case, we must trace to the declination" (*De Rer. Nat.*, II, 289). The Epicureans carried on in behalf of human freedom a continuous war against Stoic fate. In this battle their theoretical rear guard was the concept of chance. In order to appreciate the replies to their arguments made by their adversaries, consult what Cicero has to say in *De fato*, 46.

### 3. BATTLE AGAINST RELIGIOUS MYTHS

**Age of enlightenment.** The Epicureans conducted another campaign, this time against religious myths. To them these were as irksome as the concept of fate. Any discussion of the interference of the gods in the affairs of men, especially the legends dealing with immortality after death, with the judgment of the dead and the places of eternal punishment, as well as stories depicting the anger of the gods whom mortals were forced to appease, their graciousness and their providence which men must merit for themselves—all these exerted a baneful effect upon a fervent enjoyment of life, upon the will, and upon man's capacity to determine his own actions and omissions as he pleased.

In this campaign the Epicureans enlisted the aid of the theory of atoms. All events take place necessarily by means of the laws of nature, as Democritus had already proved. As a consequence, there is no need for the gods to intervene; the atoms and their responses to inherent laws suffice. Thus, the Epicureans are responsible for introducing the age of enlightenment to ancient Greece. For this reason Lucretius wrote his didactic poem, *On Nature*: "In order to banish fear and to dispel all religious darkness, we do not need either the rays of the sun or the light of day, only the sight of nature and its laws" (*De Rer. Nat.*, I, 146).

A great many thinkers, among them Hoffmann, attribute an enormous amount of good to this act by which Epicurus liberated the ancients from their superstitions and portray it "as if not only chimera had been reduced to nothingness, but also incarnate monsters had been slain and mankind rescued from slave labor."

In this twofold battle against fate and against the gods, we are confronted with a startling contradiction. To do away with fate, on the one hand, recourse must be had to chance and to the freedom

that is inextricably bound up with it; and on the other hand, to slough off the arbitrary intervention of the gods, appeal to the necessity of a causal nexus must be made. This contradiction, however, disturbed the Epicureans as little as did the opposition of their "emended theory" in general to the basic thought of atomism propounded by Democritus, which, after all, they tried to revive.

**"Believers in the gods."** To them it was of little moment, and they thought that it was not to be held against them, that in their public utterances and in their public appearances they still gave unmistakable evidence of their "belief" in the gods, that in their teaching they had exiled them to an intermundane realm, a place midway between the cosmic spaces where they dwelt in the state of repose, in a state of inactivity which we might liken to "being pensioned." In the Garden the disciples did not hold, as had the Stoics before them, to the uniqueness of the cosmos; they assumed a multiplicity of worlds. In the spaces between the different worlds, empty otherwise of cosmic matter, the gods dwelt and led a blissful existence. They lived only for themselves, without intervening any further in the cosmic machinery.

For all practical purposes this meant: We do not believe in the gods; we should wish, however, on the basis of our newly found enjoyment of life, which our teaching on pleasure has envisaged and promised, to live "as gods among men" (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, Conclusion). But why shock mankind by publicly proclaiming their atheism? To get around this difficulty, they decided in favor of a deism or even for something less: they were respectful; they invoked the gods, as did, for example, Lucretius in his didactic poem, *Venus*; they lived and they permitted the faithful also to live. The Epicureans were not dangerous to society. They knew how to live; they spoke with skilled oratory; they wrote with literary flourish; and they did not carp. Their philosophy was not charged with melancholy couched in ponderous speculative thought, but revealed a pleasing kind of lighter muse. This we can appreciate best in their ethics, of which we chiefly think when we speak of the Epicureans.

## ETHICS

### 1. HEDONISM

**Pleasure as *telos* or final end.** Ethics is particularly the special concern of hedonistic philosophy. To this tend all their thoughts, as

we have already seen. The core concept is the proposition that the moral good consists in pleasure. This Democritus had at least touched upon in his doctrine of "joyousness." It was, however, Aristippus who expressed clearest this doctrine of pleasure, and it is his hedonism that will indicate to the Epicureans the road to follow. To the Stoics, a life lived entirely in accord with nature was man's highest goal. They demanded, in addition, that their disciples bear with the trials of life and mortify their appetites in order to fulfill the tasks which this highest purpose entailed. But the Epicureans set up pleasure (*ἡδονή*) as the specific human *telos* and in conformity with it counseled their followers to seek after pleasure and to enjoy it when found. This was truly a new attitude toward life. According to the Epicureans, the original meaning of the word *good* did not denote a harmony with any known order, either the ideal or real, but expressed basically a relationship to our faculty of desire. Because a thing pleases us and causes us pleasure we may say it is good; because something else displeases us and awakens in us an aversion toward it we may say that it is bad.

Aristotle, however, had believed and declared: Because a thing is good, it pleases us. We can thus see how Epicurus turned everything topsy-turvy. For him an "objective good in itself" is not an ethical principle; on the contrary, it is a subjective pleasure that is the norm of good. "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a blissful life," we read in the letter of Epicurus to Menoeceus which contains the essentials of his ethics in a nutshell; on reading further in that same letter we discover: "All choice and all effort are directed toward the well-being of the body and the peace of soul, for this is the *telos* of a happy life. Whatever we do, we do solely to avoid unhappiness and to find peace of soul."

**Ataraxy or freedom from passion.** In this explanation we can at the same time appreciate what kind of pleasure Epicurus had in mind when he described his hedonism. By pleasure he understood absence of suffering and freedom from spiritual shocks (*ἀταραξία*, "freedom from passion"), peace and quiet of mind. Aristippus had another kind of pleasure in mind: to him pleasure was nothing else than stark experience; in all things we should seek the "pleasure of movement." Epicurus conceived of a "pleasure of repose."

**Essential weaknesses.** To us this appears to be finer and more advanced than the statement of Aristippus, especially when in addition we consider what Epicurus spoke of so fondly. We must, he

said, prefer spiritual to material enjoyments; we may not blindly and greedily yield to second-rate desires but we must apply a standard of measurement, a test which embraces the whole of life and rationally balances one thing off against another, so that a sharp pain does not follow upon a fleeting pleasure or that we forfeit a supreme pleasure which looms in the offing for a greedily snatched lesser pleasure of the moment.

1) *Prudence or moral insight above pleasure.* In general, says Epicurus, reason and prudence (*phronesis*) are indispensable for a happy life; without them and virtue there can be no such thing as pleasure. "Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy; for from prudence spring all other virtues; and it teaches us that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honorably and justly. For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them" (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*; ed. Oates, p. 32). We are at wit's end when we finish reading this excerpt. Is pleasure still the principle to be followed in all our actions or is there something else that surpasses it, guiding and ordering everything: reason, morality, law, the course of life? We would be justified in holding to such an opinion. There are, however, still other statements which refute this.

2) *Pleasure above prudence or moral insight.* It is an incontestable fact that for an Epicurean, pleasure as such and under all circumstances is good, as Aristippus had previously explained. There are no differences of quality which would be relevant, ethically speaking. And pleasure is made expressly a matter of the senses and of sensible reality. It was not only Metrodorus of Lampsacus who expressed himself in this strain: Everything good and everything beautiful must be referred to the stomach. The stomach establishes the norm for everything that concerns happiness. And we should be less disturbed about culture and the welfare of people and be more careful about what we eat and drink so that we do not suffer from stomach disturbances and by so doing truly find satiety in them. Epicurus himself offered a similar explanation: "The source and the root of all good is the stomach, and all wisdom and all spiritual sublimity may be reduced to it" (Frag. 429), just as he had previously assured us literally that "all value and all worthlessness are a matter of the *aiσθησις*, feeling" (*Letter to Menoeceus*; ed. Oates, p. 32).

3) *Sensualism.* To sensualism in the theory of knowledge there

corresponds a sensualism in the theory of value. It was not first the Bible, nor the Stoics strong in virtue, nor Kant the rigorist who characterized the life of pleasure by the predicate "sensuousness"; the specialists in hedonism propose this classification. Goethe himself thought in a like fashion, and even today some artists claim that they wish to be sensualists. But is it really true that the enjoyment which we experience while listening to a symphony of Beethoven is constituted ultimately by the relation it bears to sensualism or even to the stomach? In this connection the hedonists would have done a splendid piece of work if they had ventured a solution of this difficulty. They ought to have given us a fitting description of pleasure and pleasure as it appeared in different guises; they ought to have classified pleasure according to their actual peculiarities with the further purpose of offering a final, categorical, and cardinal determination of various kinds, especially the differentiation between sensual and spiritual joys. But they never attempted this task. For their part, and even in their own special field, they show no particular relish for that logical speculation by which they might think through to their ultimate conclusions the motives and the reasons for holding the positions which they had adopted.

## 2. PRACTICAL WISDOM

Perhaps historical facts are capable of offering a different explanation for their actions. Perhaps the Epicureans were less interested in offering an exact theoretical philosophy than practical dictates of reason for the conduct of life. Scholars such as Hoffmann have advanced the hypothesis that Epicureanism is more a mode of life, in fact, a religion — more what we would call today an "ideology" — than a strict philosophy. Viewed in this light, many features of Epicureanism become more understandable.

**Acceptance of life.** The Epicurean had a knowing eye for the riches and the beauty of this world. He accepted life in all its fullness, in its verve, with all its overmastering power. By it he succeeded in raising himself above a purely worldly level, avoided the seamy side of life, was in no way biased in his outlook, and so was enabled to form a more positive concept of his existence. The thought of death in no way hampered him nor repressed his way of life. Even in the inane argument that "death does not concern us" — as long as we are alive, death does not exist; and when it does come, we will no longer be here — there is something extremely valuable,

namely, a joyful acceptance of life, an acceptance which views only the positive side of reality and can accordingly put every day to a profitable use. The phrase of Horace, *carpe diem*, does not spring from a jealous greediness for the joys of this life, but is derived from a receptiveness for the values of existence. For the Epicureans, Venus is the symbol of this attitude. As she, so our entire existence is a fertile, creative love of life, sheer charm, and enraptured bliss. Because our existence and only our existence is able to bestow these gifts upon us, we should live every day to the full.

**Moderation.** Practical wisdom, as taught by the Epicureans, envisaged the possibility of man's limiting his desires and of practicing moderation, of acting calmly, and of possessing interior peace. "And again independence of desire we think a great good—not that we may at all times enjoy but a few things, but that if we do not possess many, we may enjoy the few in the genuine persuasion that those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it, and that all that is natural is easy to be obtained, but that which is superfluous is hard" (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*; ed. Oates, p. 32). Even the famous "live in retirement" had a profound meaning. This phrase does not denote a flight from the distressing reality of everyday life and from the overwhelming distractions of public calling, so that we may better enjoy our peace; on the contrary, the state it describes arises from the knowledge that in our solitude and in our retirement and in our peace we can discover an entirely novel reality, namely, the world of values contained in man's interior life, peace, and the purification of the soul and the first glow and joyous peace of mind and quiet of heart: "The crown of our peace of soul is incomparably more precious than even the exalted post of a mighty ruler" (Epicurus, Frag. 556).

**Friendship.** The cult of friendship also points in this direction—a cult that was so typical of Epicureanism. The Stoics projected themselves into public places in the outer world; they chose for their activities the cities and sought to be cosmopolites. The Epicureans, on the contrary, tried to find happiness in little things, in seclusion, in the company of a few chosen friends, their kindred spirits. "I hate the uninitiate crowd, and bid them avaunt," wrote Horace (*Odes*, III, i, 1). The Epicureans withdrew within themselves. Political conditions forced them to adopt such an attitude and to choose such a course. Man is an individualist, but he is not an egoist. Man lives for his friends and spends himself for them. "Among the many

things which wisdom contributes to the happiness of life, there is nothing greater, nothing more fruitful, nothing more joyful than friendship" (Epicurus, Frag. 539). "We choose our friends because of the pleasure they afford us, but we are willing to undergo much suffering for them" (Frag. 546). A group of men who express themselves in this way are not primarily intent upon enjoying themselves. This school, which clearly recognized the uncertainties that exist in men and in connection with life, overcame them by an even greater faith in these same men and in this very same life.

**The wise man.** Friendship is a fruit of wisdom. In this statement we are confronted again with the oft-quoted notion of wisdom. All Greek philosophical schools had busied themselves with the notion of "the wise man." But each had advanced its own concept. The schooling in critical speculation which we acquire by our effort to discover in the one term the various meanings which had been attached to it in the course of time cannot be underestimated or in any sense despised. To the Epicureans the wise man was a connoisseur of life. There are not many who can find fault with his maxims. Those gifted with a speculative bent will naturally pose the question: What does the art of living actually mean? What does life in general signify? Are not a variety of different things suggested by these several topics? If we should seek to define the art of living according to the Epicureans so that we might arrive at such a uniform meaning, we would be forced to recall how very superficially their ethical principles had been thought out. But this objection will not in any way offset the value of the concrete rules which the Epicureans formulated for conduct; for theorems are oftentimes mere symbols behind which there is another reality stronger than the logical summarization of the notes, which makes its influence felt over wide areas, and instinctively pursues its own course even in those instances in which the explanation of its concept is at variance with the truth. "Dear friend, gray indeed is theory; but green, the golden tree of life."

## II. ACADEMY AND SCEPTICISM

In spite of all polemics, both the Epicureans and the Stoics were in agreement on one point, namely, on their dogmatic method. In the history of philosophy we find that an unyielding dogmatism always arises as a reaction to doubt. In Hellenism also a patent

scepticism is balanced over against the dogmatic tendencies of the schools, especially in the Academy and with such men as Pyrrho of Elis and his school.

## THE MIDDLE AND THE NEW ACADEMY

### GREAT FIGURES IN THE ACADEMY

We differentiate from the *Old Academy* (see above, p. 132 f.), a *Middle Academy* whose chief representatives were Arcesilaus (315-241 B.C.) and Carneades (214-129 B.C.), and the *New Academy* which was guided by Philo of Larissa who fled to Rome in 87 B.C. and there welcomed Cicero as his pupil, as well as Antiochus of Ascalon whose lectures in Athens in 79 B.C. were heard by Cicero.

### Bibliography:

Thomas Woodhouse Levin, *Six Lectures Introductory to the Philosophical Writings of Cicero* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1871).—William Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1862).

### 1. THE MIDDLE ACADEMY

**Character of the Academic scepticism.** In the course of time in the Old Academy the exalted scientific objectives of Plato were lost sight of and later, by reason of primitive credulity which flourished in it, completely disappeared. In the Middle Academy the leaders returned to his original critical attitude which demanded a solid foundation for every statement that science advanced, namely, argumentation and logical proof. They were not dogmatists; they had become critics and sceptics. The scepticism did not spring from a sterile urge to criticize, but stemmed rather from a methodological doubt which was cultivated for the sake of truth. The criticism was directed to that point at which the philosopher had previously abandoned his inquiry and had as a consequence insecurely bolstered the truth. The purpose of this new attempt was simply to stabilize the truth anew and with, what was hoped, better results.

**Arcesilaus.** Thus, for example, Arcesilaus took exception to the theory of Stoic evidence and maintained that the qualifications by which the Stoics sought to bolster up the cataleptic (unimpeachable) representation (see above, p. 220) were not without loopholes and were

not sufficient actually to guarantee the truth. The Stoics, furthermore, did not offer a secure foundation or a sufficient warrant for experience, because the mistakes against which the criterion of truth was supposed to protect them could appear in it as well as in those other representations over which it was supposed to supervise.

**Carneades.** Carneades rejected evidence for reasons which were very detailed. He entered into minutiae and cast considerable doubt upon the method of proof which had been taught by traditional logic. In addition, he attacked the reasoning by which the Stoics sought to justify the existence, providence, and justice of God, not to prove that he personally was an atheist, but simply to show that science had not yet succeeded in accomplishing that of which it had given such rich promise. In ethics, Carneades pointed up the inherent weaknesses that were contained in traditional views of the past. He did this in a very emphatic fashion, since he was concerned with offering tangible evidence of the former uncritical credulity. He accompanied a delegation of philosophers to Rome in 155 B.C. There one day he spoke in praise of justice. Because of the cogent proofs he had advanced, he was commandeered the next day to give another, but this time against justice. This latter was also acclaimed for the clarity of the arguments which it developed, although on this second occasion he maintained that there was no such thing as justice in this world. According to him, the coercive legislation of the state is the very antithesis of justice, as was verified in the politics of the Roman Empire. If they should really wish to practice justice, the Romans would be forced to return their vassal states to the conquered from whom they had wrested them, and they themselves would be compelled to return to the rude huts from which they had poured forth over the whole known world. This was too much for the straightforward Cato. If we should subject the convictions on which the state rests to intellectualism of this kind, we would in the end endanger public security. For this reason Cato introduced another *ceterum censeo*, and this time it ran as follows: All philosophers must be banished from the city as quickly as possible (*philosophos quam celerrime esse expellendos*). Two worlds had clashed: an objective striving to attain to truth, and practical reality.

**Epochē or the suspension of judgment.** And what was the result of this criticism and this scepticism? If it is so difficult to arrive at absolute certitude concerning the truth, it should be recommended to all that they be discreet in their judgments; that is to say, they

should practice the so-called *ἐποχή* or suspension of judgment. We do not as yet possess the truth, only probability. And in probability there are several differences of degree: probabilities which can be believed; others that can be believed and are uncontested; and, finally, such as can be believed and are both uncontested and fully supported by proof. This should call to mind the terms "belief" and "proof" as they were used by David Hume, who frequently appeals to the scepticism of the Academy.

## 2. THE NEW ACADEMY

In the New Academy the *epochē* developed into an ironic attitude toward all systems. Its members adopted eclecticism and drew their notions of the "good" from wherever they could find it. Antiochus of Ascalon, for example, showed that the Academy, the Peripatos, and the Stoa agreed on fundamentals. Typical of such eclecticism was Cicero (106–43 B.C.). He claimed that he belonged to the Academy. This is true only insofar as it concerns his theory of knowledge in which he makes room for the *epochē*. In his ethical views, however, the rational heritage of the Stoa played a major formative role, as it did in his anthropological and theological doctrines. He also drew upon the Peripatos for many concepts and theorems. In fact he is supposed to have edited the didactic poem of the arch-Epicurean, Lucretius, even though he may not have personally endorsed either its thoughts or its sentiments. Cicero was not an original thinker, but he was unbelievably well read and continuously offered his contemporaries ever new riches of thought. He says of his own writings: they are plagiarized and they were rather easily composed. I have added only those words which suggested themselves at the moment of writing (*Ad. Att.*, XII, 52, 3). Especially in this respect he has become for us a rich source of philosophical history. Of much the same type of thinker was his friend, Varro (116–27 B.C.), from whom St. Augustine drew much of his knowledge of ancient philosophy.

## P Y R R H O N I C S C E P T I C I S M

### THE CHIEF PERSONAGES OF PYRRHONIC SCEPTICISM

Pyrrhonic scepticism forms another branch of critical speculation, even though in the course of its development many stray strands are interwoven. The founder was Pyrrho of Elis (360–270 B.C.). More understandable for us is his pupil, Timon of Phlius (d. 230 B.C.).

Among the younger sceptics we can list Anesidemus (first century after Christ) and Sextus Empiricus (one-half century after Christ).

### 1. "EPOCHĒ" OR SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT

In Pyrrho doubt was much more radically developed than it had been in the Academy. In him we can find it quite categorically explained: We can never know things as they actually are but only as they appear to be; phenomena are however subjective. The result: again the *epochē*. But in Pyrrho doubt received also a positive meaning: it becomes, as Hoffmann says, an ethical doubt. Doubt should help us to liberate the ego from the compulsion and the constraint of environment, so that it can be entirely the proper "ego" and can remain entirely unruffled.

### 2. ATARAXY OR FREEDOM FROM PASSION

The *epochē* was bound up with the ideal of the ataraxy or freedom from passion which was as much at home here as it was among the Epicureans or as apathy was among the Stoics. We perceive in these notions the soul-quavering of the Greek people who under the blows of political catastrophe dreamed the wishful dream of their own desires, the mirage of indestructibility, and sought salvation in philosophy which the politics of the era was unable to effect.

## III. THE PERIPATETICS

The Peripatetic school, stanchly adhering to its model, the mature Aristotle, appeared at the very beginning as encyclopedic research in particular and in detail (see p. 213). Later on the Peripatos will develop the study of the experimental sciences and by this trend set itself, in a typical fashion, apart from both the Stoics and the Epicureans as well as from the Academy, which had cultivated chiefly a general philosophy of life.

### THE LEADING PERIPATETICS

In the centuries' old history of the school, most prominent were Strato of Lampsacus, the great physicist who headed the school from 287-269 B.C.; his pupil Aristarchus of Samos, the great astronomer, who prepared the way for Copernicus and the Copernican system (see p. 15); Critolaus who, along with a member of the Stoic school and of the Academy, represented Athens in Rome (see p.

260). This fact alone proves more than anything else what intense energy and vigor the schools of philosophy possessed in the ancient world. During the decline of Peripateticism we may name Andronicus of Rhodes (first century B.C.), who collected the writings of Aristotle and preserved them for posterity; Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. A.D. 200), the peerless exegete of Aristotle; Galen, the physician (c. A.D. 200); and Claudius Ptolemaius (c. A.D. 178).

### 1. NATURALISTIC EXPLANATION OF ARISTOTLE

Important for the history of philosophy, especially for an interpretation of Aristotle, is the naturalism which became evident in Peripateticism as represented by Strato. The "physicist" rejected the notion of a transcendent Unmoved Mover and viewed the world only as the sum of powers inherent in it. He attacked, in addition, teleology and the causality of substantial forms. He acknowledged only a material causality in the sensory reality of space and time, as Democritus had previously done. Strato was also able to dispense with an immortal soul. In him Aristotle was purged of the elements which he had appropriated from Plato and to which he had clung so tenaciously in spite of the constant and bitter polemic that he had carried on against his former master. But do such notions truly represent Aristotle? Alexander of Aphrodisias himself moved in the same direction. In his speculation the "prior by nature" is no longer a form, but the concrete individual thing, as only an empiricist could accept it. The divine *Nous*, by which we think, is not an individual, but a unique and universal *Nous* indwelling in the whole of mankind. And the soul comes into being and ceases along with the body. Again we put the question: Is this the genuine, the real Aristotle?

### 2. THE PERIPATOS, THE STOA, AND THE MIDDLE AGES

Alexander of Aphrodisias was well known in the Middle Ages and he may well have been one of the reasons why that period interpreted Aristotle in a realistic, empiricistic sense. Another reason was the very popular pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On the World*, which had been influenced by Stoic naturalism based on its theory of knowledge. The actual author must be sought in the rank of the pupils of the Peripatos itself, and he must have written it in accordance with Poseidonius' own views upon which he leaned rather heavily. There is much that the Middle Ages considered to be Aristotelian which was actually Stoic in origin, especially in those

topics which concerned the notion of empiricism and of reality. That Aristotle can be interpreted in a sense other than the prevailing one is proved by the fact that according to the Peripatetics the interpretation of Aristotle was usurped by the Neo-Platonists. This was that other Aristotle with which we come into contact here. It would be necessary to assay with original source material the influence upon the Middle Ages of those men who offered the Hellenistic interpretation of Aristotle. In such an effort we would be forced to rely not only upon those authors and those citations that have already been advanced but also upon the light which would be afforded us by the general culture of the era into which the spiritual heritage of the Hellenistic philosophical schools had been so transformed that men no longer quoted it, but upon which they nevertheless relied and depended. But before this could be done we would first have to examine the commentaries on Aristotle, first given the world by the Berlin Academy. These have scarcely been opened.

# CHAPTER 12

## NEO-PLATONISM: A PHILOSOPHY AND A RELIGION

Whereas all the other philosophical schools during the era of the Roman emperors gradually disappeared, in the resurgence of Neo-Platonism we witness an exactly antithetical phenomenon. Through it, Hellenistic speculation awakened to a new flowering. This was, however, the final state of a dying plant rather than an indication of an organic growth. Upon it there followed an abrupt disintegration. The whole of Neo-Platonism, its preparation as well as its flowering, impressed upon the spiritual mien of the epoch a very pronounced feature—namely, the sharp delineation of strong religious feeling which often turned into a pronounced mysticism, into a genuine mysticism, occasionally into an extreme mysticism, and here and there into a pseudo-mysticism. That Hellenistic philosophy was ripe for the introduction of such a religious element is well known. Plato wrote about piety; Aristotle, about prayer; Theophrastus and Eudemus, about the gods and their worship. But the religious feelings and sentiments which became incorporated into the philosophical currents of Platonism churned up still loftier waves, turned into raging storms, vibrated, and finally ended in mystic ardor or a formal yearning for redemption.

Neo-Platonism did not always draw its material from the writings of Plato; frequently it turned to the traditions of the Platonic school, a tradition which had remained unbroken from the time of Plato down to Plotinus and one whose characteristics can be easily traced also in the speculation which is typical of Seneca, Poseidonius, Antiochus, and Cicero. But behind all this we can detect something still more powerful and genuine, namely, the remarkable, almost frenzied religious spirit of the era which can be discerned in the phenomenon of Neo-Pythagoreanism and in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, which served as a direct preparation for Neo-Platonism.

## THE PREPARATION FOR NEO-PLATONISM

### 1. THE NEO-PYTHAGOREANS

**Original sources.** At one time Plato expanded his system upon a Pythagorean basis. In like fashion Neo-Platonism branched out from Neo-Pythagorean beginnings. Scholars do not know exactly where this movement actually originated—probably among the survivors of the Pythagorean secret societies in Italy. If we keep this in mind, and especially the continuity of descent from the Pythagoreans, we can readily understand its basic structure: the curious mixture of asceticism, flight from reality, longing for the next life, mysticism, manticism or divination, and magic.

**Neo-Pythagoreans and Platonists.** Among the famous members of the school we may name the following: Nigidius Figulus (d. 45 B.C.), a friend of Cicero, who wrote a book on the gods; Apollonius of Tyana, from the first half of the first century after Christ, who was an author, an itinerant preacher, a wonder-worker, and a prophet all in one; Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. A.D. 150), and others.

Spiritually akin to the Neo-Pythagoreans are a number of personages who are described in the history of philosophy as *Middle Platonists* or *Eclectic Platonists*: Thrasyllus, court astrologist of Tiberius; Plutarch of Chaeronea (A.D. 45–125), the author of the famous *Lives* of renowned Greeks and Romans, of the *Moralia*, and many religious writings; and somewhat later, Theon of Smyrna, Gaius, Albinus and Apuleius of Madaura, Maximus of Tyre, Atticus, and Nicostratus; Celsus, who in A.D. 179 wrote an attack against the Christians which Origen refuted; Numenius of Apamea (second half of the second century after Christ), who authored a unique doctrine of a trinity of gods, namely the Father, the Demiurge of the world, and the godlike world itself; and those works which have been handed down to posterity under the name of Hermes Trismegistus, dating somewhere from about the end of the third century after Christ. The ecclesiastical writers drew heavily upon the Neo-Pythagorean sources and by so doing became unwittingly the cause of certain aftereffects. In this connection we should compare, for example, Eusebius and his *Preparatio Evangelica* with the Neo-Pythagorean documents.

**Basic notions.** The basis of Neo-Pythagorean views was the old Pythagorean dualism of heré and hereafter, flesh and spirit, purity and

impurity. The fundamental ideas contained in these antinomies were that God had abandoned the world; that He is so totally different from us that we are completely unable to approach Him; that, on the other hand, at some future time a relationship between God and the world will again be established. This connection will be effected not only on the assumption of a mediator, who will be the perfect image of God, His son and His aid, but also on the assumption of exemplar ideas in God, which as *logoi* and seed-forces will become operative both in the world and in things and will contribute to their formation.

The future restoration does not entail the rejection of that dualism to which the system held, for that which God bestows is grace from on high and a gift in which the giver does not surrender his identity. The sublimity of God is in no way diminished, but man nonetheless becomes divinized. Just as a light that enkindles a fire is not extinguished by causing kindling wood to blaze, so our spirit, no matter how many earthly qualities we ascribe to it, by reason of the gifts of grace, is elevated to God's own level so that we may share in His nature. The more sublime God is, and the more debased mankind becomes, so much the more brightly glows the mystical fire, and so much the more strongly the longing that is engendered. To preach this doctrine and to encourage others to strive for it was the constant aim of the Neo-Pythagoreans.

## 2. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

The world-wide extent of the Hellenistic period led to a contact between Hellenism and Judaism. The chief exponent of this rapprochement was Philo of Alexandria (25 B.C.–A.D. 40). A great number of his numerous works have been preserved (the best edition: Cohn-Wendland, *Philonis Opera*, 7 vols. with an exhaustive index by H. Leisegang). They afford a good insight into that period in which the Church broke with Hellenism, for Philo supplied the Fathers of the Church with many more terms and concepts than did the Neo-Pythagoreans (cf. H. Wolfson, *Philo* [1947]).

**The Bible and philosophy.** Philo based his theories on the revelation that God gave His chosen people in the Old Testament. This was the "royal way to knowledge." But in interpreting these inspired writings, he was greatly influenced by the Platonism of his age, by Stoicism, and especially the Pythagorean philosophy of religion. As a consequence, the letter of the revealed religion had in most

instances to be interpreted in a figurative sense. For a long time Greek philosophy, especially the Stoic, had applied this allegorical interpretation to the dogmas of popular religion. The syncretism of the period naturally led in this direction, and so Philo felt justified in pursuing such a course, but in addition he had falsely assumed that the Greek philosophers had known the Old Testament. From him there arose a legend which was frequently repeated by the Fathers, namely, that Plato was a kind of Greek-speaking Moses and had possibly acquired his knowledge from the historical Moses.

**God, the entirely different One.** The fundamental concept of Philo's philosophy was the notion of God. In contrast to the world He is absolutely transcendent. We cannot describe what He is; only that He is. At most we may say of Him that He is Being. To predicate any other attributes of Him is impossible, because He infinitely surpasses all of them. He is better than good, more perfect than perfection. In these and similar assertions which were frequently emphasized by the Neo-Pythagoreans, we meet for the first time what later on will be called negative theology.

**The sinful world.** The second fundamental concept of Philo is revealed in his view of matter, i.e., the created world around us. There was a creation. We read of it in the Bible. But creation did not involve making something out of nothing, but only out of eternal pre-existent matter. So much we may read in Greek philosophy. Matter is the evil principle. In men it is the cause of sin. The body is the tomb of the soul. It is possible for the soul to purify itself of this matter. The emotions should not only be lessened and reformed; they should be entirely uprooted. All these are well-known overtones drawn from Pythagoreanism, Platonism, and Stoicism.

**The Logos.** Dualism must, however, disappear. A bridge must be built. And thus we have the third, the most famous of all the basic concepts of Philo's philosophy, the doctrine of the Logos. Middle beings, "forces" or powers (*δυνάμεις*), are postulated. At one time these are called the properties of God, namely, His ideas and His thoughts; at other times they are set apart by such titles as His servants and His emissaries, as angels and demons who execute His will. As ideas these middle beings are active in the world. On earth they constitute the genera and the species, and through them as structural forms a cosmos arises out of chaos. Naturally these powers remind us of the *logoi spermatikoi* of the Stoics. All these middle beings are then included in the concept of the Logos. Upon this concept is focused

the entire speculation of Philo. The Logos is the idea of ideas, the force of forces, the supreme angel, the representative and ambassador of God, the first-begotten Son of God, the second God (the third is the world, as we are taught by Numenius). This Logos is one with the wisdom and intellect of God. By it the world was created, and it is the soul which animates the world. The Logos is the representative of the world before God as its high priest, its intercessor, and its paraclete. In such a concept the Logos is neither an exclusively personal nor an exclusively impersonal being. How we are actually to conceive of it remains a matter of conjecture. And our notion of it must remain in abeyance, because the Logos should occupy a middle position, should be a mediator, and as a consequence should be integral in form in both respects, the personal and the impersonal.

How we may conceive the Logos as a mediator who should re-establish contact between two widely separated worlds is explained for us by Philo in his epistemological treatment of the word, the *verbum*. A word stands midway between two worlds, between the world of the senses and the world of the spirit. A word is neither a sheer matter of sense (sound), nor sheer spirituality (only an idea). A word that "is pronounced" (*λόγος προφορικός*) is, on the one hand, something that pertains to the senses, because it is spoken and can therefore be heard; but on the other hand, because by it we can think of something, it is begotten by the spirit and exists by reason of the interior word (*λόγος ἐνδιάθετος*), so that in the word we can readily perceive that two distinct spheres are truly united. In accord with this explanation we can picture to ourselves the sensory character of the universe as the word made flesh. We have here also a twofold Logos: "one which is related to the incorporeal and exemplary ideas which form the structure of a conceivable world" and "the other which is related to material objects which are imitations and copies of those ideas by which the cosmos is perfected" (*Vita Moesis*, II, 127).

**Ecstasy and wisdom.** There must certainly be a Logos also in man. If the Logos is the measure and the archetype, and the flesh is the tomb of the soul, it is evident that our task in life consists in liberating ourselves from the trammels of the body and in withdrawing from it in ecstasy and through the Logos, which is eternal wisdom, to become one with the divinity itself. By means of our own meager strength we could never attain to such a union, but a power which emanates from out of the Godhead, the divine Pneuma, will make this

possible for us. This, then, is the way of arriving at "the unalloyed, heavenly wisdom." Here again we are confronted with still another notion of wisdom.

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## NEO-PLATONISM

The vitality of Neo-Platonism can best be seen in the light of the fact that its representatives were to be found in all the centers of Hellenistic culture—in Alexandria, Rome, Athens, Antioch, and Pergamon. From this we can also appreciate anew, this time at the end of antiquity, how awesome a spiritual stature Platonism itself must have had when it underwent a resurrection on such a scale. It was, as it were, almost a new mythos which appeared. True, the whole was something artificial, only a "revival," and, as we maintain today, Neo-Platonism was not true Platonism but rather Plotinianism. The Neo-Platonists, however, regarded themselves as genuine heirs of Plato. Concepts, notions, and even literary turns of expression adopted by Plato actually reappear in Neo-Platonic writings with an inexhaustible richness. In Plotinus we might imagine that we saw many formal paraphrases of Platonic thoughts. For example, in his treatise on beauty (*Enn.*, I, 6) we can recognize an emended and expanded reproduction of the Platonic Dialogue, the *Symposium*. There were, however, many new elements that were added. Not only do we know that the ideas of other philosophers and their schools which had appeared in the meanwhile, e.g., Peripatetics, Academicians, Stoics, and Epicureans, were assimilated and digested, but we are also confronted with a new, inner buoyancy, with religious and mystical sensitivity that was characteristic of the period and constituted the spiritual life-pulse of Neo-Platonic writings.

The way in which we ultimately view the relationship of Platonism to Neo-Platonism depends entirely upon the manner in which we interpret Platonism itself. If we should approach Plato with the eyes of idealism in the sense given that term by Neo-Kantians, we would

naturally look askance at Neo-Platonism and would evaluate it simply as an uncritical metaphysics and mysticism. Whoever examines both ranges of ideas with the eyes of the ancients, that is to say, with the eyes of ideo-realism, will make less sharp distinctions. No matter how we face the issue, we must always remember in any case that Neo-Platonism exercised an influence over and handed down to the subsequent centuries, to Christianity and to the Middle Ages, whatever was fertile in Platonic ideas and ideals.

#### 1. AMMONIUS SACCAS (d. A.D. 242)

Ammonius Saccas is generally reckoned as the founder of Neo-Platonism. We know nothing of him save his name, and that he died in Alexandria, which was to be the city that became the cradle of Neo-Platonism.

#### 2. PLOTINUS

**Life.** The actual founder of this school was Plotinus (A.D. 204-269). He had attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria. In the company of the Emperor Giordanus, Plotinus had taken the field against the Persians in order better to become acquainted with their thoughts as well as with those of Indian philosophy. After this campaign, in A.D. 244, he traveled to Rome and opened his philosophical school. Because of his noble sentiments, his modesty, his stern morality and selflessness, he was highly esteemed. Under his influence the Emperor Gallienus toyed for a considerable time with the idea of founding a city built upon the specifications laid down in Plato's *Republic*. Plotinus not only taught a philosophy, but he also lived it. He must, as a consequence, be numbered among the genuine representatives of that philosophical viewpoint according to which philosophy meant not only wisdom drawn from books and historical knowledge but also a way of life. Although this "mystic," as had Aristotle before him, placed the contemplative life above the active, he nevertheless busied himself frequently with the affairs of concrete practical life, cared for crowds of children in his own home and acted as their guardian, helped his fellow men even in the most minute natters of everyday life. He personally led a singularly mortified life. Eating and sleeping were restricted to an absolute minimum. He was a vegetarian. He remained unmarried and refused to have his portrait painted, "so that the shadowy image of a shadowy image might not be perpetrated upon society." As a consequence he was

able to devote himself unstintingly to scientific investigations and to dedicate himself to the pursuit of the Supreme Good. Four times he is credited with having experienced an ecstatic union with the Divinity. Clairvoyance was also ascribed to him.

**Works.** His writings, which he began to compose only after he had reached the age of fifty, were gathered together by his pupil, Porphyry, and arranged so that each of the six books has nine chapters (hence, the derivation of the name *Enneads*). The latest edition is E. Bréhier, *Plotin, Ennéades*, Texte établi et traduit, six volumes, Paris, 1924–1938. The *Enneads* have been translated into English, in five volumes, by S. MacKenna and B. S. Page (1917–1930).

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The philosophy of Plotinus is the result of two intellectual movements. On the one hand, being is rudely broken into two distinct orders, the one suprasensory and the other sensory; and on the other hand, an attempt is made to weld them together by making a whole series of subdivisions in an endeavor to derive the last from the first, the subsequent from the prior. Dualism and monism thus are separated by this dialectical device and are united in a new synthesis.

**God.** The process begins with the thesis that God is separated not only from the world but also from being in general. He is the One above Being, the Super-Being. In short there is no predicate or predication which we may have come to know through the material world that can be applied to him or used of him. Certainly nothing of the sensory world can be predicated of him, nor can he even be described by any spiritual category. "That first Being is therefore not

a spirit, but something prior to the spirit; for a spirit is something present in existing things; but that first Being is not just something, for it is prior to everything. And it is not a being; for a being has as its form likewise the form of a being; that first Being is however without a spiritual form. Since the essence of the One is the Begetter of all things, it is itself not one of these. This first Being is therefore neither a something, nor a qualitative being nor a quantitative being, neither a spirit nor a soul. Furthermore it is not something that is moved, but at the same time it is not something in repose. This Being is not in a place and it is not in time, but the unique form as such; or even more, without any form, since it was in existence before any form, before motion and before repose, for these are bound up with being and make of it a variety" (*Enn.*, VI, 9, 3).

It is only this One ( $\epsilon\nu$ ) which Plotinus will call God. He conceives this One both in the sense of a negation of many or of multiplicity and in the sense of an absolutely First. He also called the One the Good as such. Of the fairly precise statements of Aristotle concerning the Supreme Principle everything has disappeared. We are brought face to face again with a negative theology with which we have become acquainted in Philo and the other Neo-Pythagoreans, and we shall find this theme repeated in subsequent centuries.

**Emanation.** If we cannot define God by means of concepts derived from the world of reality around us, would it be possible to do the opposite, that is, to learn something of the world of reality by meditating upon God? Plotinus was of this opinion. If in this world, we, for example, should speak of the One, we would do so only because everyone shares in the original One. And so it is in regard to all other notions. With the knowledge that to explain being we must proceed not from below to above but from above to below, and with the knowledge that everything is determined by God insofar as being itself and existing realities are concerned, the entire philosophical process again moves forward. Plotinus did not, however, permit the derivative to be determined by an hypothesis as had Plato, nor as had Aristotle by his supreme efficient cause; on the contrary, he simply introduced another concept as a foundation for his notion of being, namely, the notion of emanation.

1) *The notion of emanation.* Because of its very fullness, the One overflows into reality without however exhausting itself, just as the sun gives off light without undergoing any decrease in its powers or in its brilliance, or just as an original painting provides indefinite

material for copies, or just as a well supplies water for the stream which spouts from it, or just as the perfect posits the imperfect as necessary. The thing derived always becomes something else, but always inheres in its original source. If we should leave out of consideration the figures and the examples which are used here and turn our attention solely to the thought expressed by them—the perfect determines the imperfect with necessity—it would become evident that Plotinus' theory is nothing more than the Platonic "hypothesis" and the concept of participation which Plato had advanced. We must, however, make this reservation: these concepts are in danger of being misunderstood because of the emphasis given to the intermediate beings which consequently appear as true reality—something that is still further stressed by the mediator role which these intermediary beings must play. This gives rise to the impression that there might possibly be other realities besides the One, in fact, many such realities. Indeed Plotinus sought, as did Plato before him, "to establish" everything from above, namely from the first being, and Plotinus recognized only one reality, the reality of the One. This reality becomes less and less, the lower we descend, just as the intensity of light diminishes the farther removed it is from its source, until finally we have only shadows in the realm of the material. But even these shadows are only reflected shadows of the One. The matter of the world becomes reality only by means of the forms; these are derived from the soul, and this in turn draws its form from the spirit, "so that in it there is to be found everything that is transmitted" (*Enn.*, V, 9, 3). And since the spirit is determined by the original One, everything (the all) is also present in It.

2) *The aporia or difficulty regarding emanation.* Is this "everything" of which we speak something different or not? What must we hold? At one time, the Same is the Same; and at other times, it is not entirely the Same. At one time, the Other is truly the Other; again, at times it is not entirely different from the Same. Both pantheism and monism thrive on the equivocal character of the concepts "to be identical" and "to be different." In this respect the intermediate stages do not offer much help. They do not solve the problem but simply relegate it to the background for a time. For before examining each indeterminate stage we are forced to ask the question: Is this stage really identical with the previous one or is it something different? If the former is true, the latter is not and vice versa. For this reason, to turn to something else which should be an inherent identity

does not settle the question, at least if we are to understand all the concepts in the same sense, and if we wish to avoid equivocation, one of the elementary postulates of logical speculation. According to genuine Platonism, the world does not actually "differ" from God; it is, however, "different" from Him by reason of the concept of participation which never signifies identity — only similarity. Plotinianism, on the other hand, almost achieves the pantheistic identification of an uncreated Being with a created one, because under the influence of both Aristotelian and Stoic concepts of reality it seeks to effect a twofold objective: the recognition that there are many distinct realities and the doctrine of emanation which postulates that *one* being inheres in and confers intrinsic reality to the many.

**The Nous.** 1) *Son of God.* The first thing which the One begets of itself is the spirit, the Nous. That precisely this spirit and not something else is produced by the One results less from a factual than from a purely historical reason. The Nous had always been well known; in fact, it was the most sublime factor in all previous attempts that had been made to explain being. And so it was also for Plotinus. However, according to him, the Nous can no longer be the first and the foremost because it already signifies a twofold reality: where there is knowledge there must always be something that is known. Thus, the Nous is accorded a place immediately after the One. This Nous is the sum total of all ideas, norms, laws, structures of being; it is the intelligible universe and at the same time the Platonic Demiurge. The Nous approaches close to the aboriginal, the primeval One; in fact, it is a copy of it and at the same time the glance by which the One looks at itself, or in the language of mythology "it is the second god, the son of god, who is begotten of the first god" (*Enn.*, I, 1, 7). The use of philosophical principles and concepts in attempting to explain the Christian dogma on the Blessed Trinity will later on derive stimuli from this source.

2) *The Demiurge.* The Nous immediately busies itself with the task of continuing the process of emanation from which it itself proceeds. As the sum total of all ideas and as Demiurge it begets the world, "for it befits the spirit as the purest of the pure to proceed from no other source than from that of the original source itself, and once it becomes existent to beget all beings along with itself, that is, ideas in all their beauty, and all the spiritual gods" (*Enn.*, I, 1, 7). "As the nous possesses full maturity it must by its very nature beget; such a great generative power could not lie

dormant or sterile" (*ibid.*). The world is generated in accordance with the storehouse of ideas enclosed in the Demiurge. We need only to read this in order to understand immediately how the Platonic *Symposium*, *Timaeus*, and the Stoic *λόγοι σπερματικοί* (seminal reasons) produced such aftereffects. At the same time we stand on that hallowed ground from which the Church Fathers drew their inspiration when they located the Platonic ideas in the mind of God.

**The Soul.** The first reality that is assumed in the creation of the world is the soul. "The product of the spirit is in some way thought, and this begins to exist in that part of the soul that reflects; it is this which circles around the spirit; it is the light that goes out from the spirit" (*Enn.*, I, 1, 7).

The cosmic soul is the first that comes into existence. Contained in it and consequently bound to it by bonds of eternal sympathy live the individual souls. The soul stands midway between the intelligibles—whose three essences (*hypostases*) we have become acquainted with in the One, in the Nous, and in the Soul—and the realm of the sensory. This soul forms a bridge by means of the fact that it itself is always a whole and as a consequence is akin to the One, and on the other hand it has a relation to parts and thus is related to the many. "The soul is primarily not divisible, but it becomes divisible in bodies" (*Enn.*, IV, 2, 1). By this fact the soul approaches closely to the multiple and at the same time to becoming, because the multiple and becoming are mutually complementary. In Greek philosophy the soul was always conceived as becoming. According to the *Phaedrus* of Plato, the soul is self-movement and it appears as such also to Aristotle. So also here. The lower the soul descends from the heights of the angels and demons to mankind, animals, and plants, so much the less is its unity, and so much more closely does it approach to the many, to the divisible; so much the more the pleasure it finds in change.

**The sensible world.** The lowest stage to which the soul descends, that stage where it clothes itself with a body, is nature. Nature is a copy of the intelligible world and in this respect perfect. But after all it is only a copy; as a consequence, less a spirit, less a force, less freedom, and less an activity; in their place there is substituted passivity. Now there arise both time and place. Instead of freedom we find instinct. In itself the soul is free and initiates of its own accord and spontaneously an entirely new series of causes. "The soul is the

cause which first of all moves itself" (*Enn.*, III, 1, 8). The soul, however, is master of itself only so long as it remains outside the body. Once in the body it loses its independence and becomes inter-linked with the law of causality that governs the visible world. We will be confronted with this ancient, typically Platonic, in fact originally Pythagorean concept of the soul in Kant when he distinguishes between the intelligible and the empirical characters; the former is free, the latter is not.

The last stage of emanation is matter. This matter is no longer something positive, but rather negative. Consequently, it becomes the negation of the good, the principle of evil, and so the antipode of the aboriginal One. The chasm has been bridged; all being is derived from one principle; we have the "one and the all," the *εν καὶ πᾶν*. But this chasm reopens in a genuinely dialectical fashion, at the end, when matter appears as an antipode.

**The return to the One.** With this the cosmic process is not finished. Just as the One does not remain static, so reality must also find its way back to its original starting point. This is reached by means of the individual soul. And here it is that Plotinus begins to expound his ethical views. Since the individual soul exists only as a moment on the cosmic soul, this process becomes a cosmic event. By reason of the fact that the soul was joined to a body, it became sinful. Consequently, it is faced with the task of freeing itself from the body, of purifying itself, of aligning itself with the Nous, and of becoming enlightened by it, of becoming one with the ideas, and by means of the Nous of becoming one with the aboriginal One itself. The soul, then, in ecstasy departs from the body, loses its consciousness of self, and is absorbed by a kind of mystical union into the universe. Man and the universe have finally reached that haven from which they had embarked. This reunion is pictured in the most glowing terms (*Enn.*, VI, 9) and by it we become conscious of a new element that has been introduced, the kinship of philosophy with religion and with mysticism, a kinship which is so characteristic of Neo-Platonism. To understand the concept of ecstasy we do not need to consider exclusively Oriental influences. We have already seen how greatly Greek philosophy was interested in religious questions, and H. Leisegang has demonstrated that the concept of ecstasy was not foreign to the Greek genius. By reading the short Platonic Dialogue, *Ion*, we can easily obtain clarity on this point.

### 3. THE NEO-PLATONIC SCHOOLS

The thoughts of Plotinus were taken up and further developed by a great number of Neo-Platonic schools. We distinguish here: (a) The *School of Plotinus* himself with its subsequent leaders, Amelius and Porphyry (233–304), the renowned author of the introduction to the Aristotelian *Categories*. With it there begins a long series of Neo-Platonic commentaries on Plato, Aristotle, and Theophrastus. (b) The *Syrian School* with Iamblichus, whose *Protrepticus* had profound effect on Augustine by way of the *Hortensius* of Cicero. (c) The *Pergamon School*, to which the teacher of Julian the Apostate belonged, and which became the center of the struggle that the Neo-Platonists waged against the infant Church on behalf of the ancient heathen culture. (d) The *Athenian School* with Proclus and Simplicius. (e) The *Alexandrian School* with Sinesius of Cyrene, who became Bishop of Ptolemy in 411, together with John Philoponus, Asclepius, Olympiodorus, Elias, David, etc. The Christian Bishop, Nemesius of Emesa (c. 400) came into contact with the Alexandrian school. (f) The *Neo-Platonists of the Latin West* with Macrobius (c. 400), Chalcidius (fifth century), Marius Victorinus (fourth century), and Boethius (d. 525).

### 4. PROCLUS

**Proclus and the subsequent centuries.** In the school at Athens, Neo-Platonism (411–485) was developed by Proclus into a complete and well-rounded system. He is the first Scholastic and served as a model both for Mohammedan and mediaeval Scholasticism. Especially his *Institutio Theologica* (*στοιχείωσις θεολογική*) exercised a great influence on Scholasticism by way of the *Liber de Causis*, which contained excepts of it. Since the *Liber de Causis* was for a long time considered the work of Aristotle and as such enjoyed great popularity, Proclus became one of those men who brought it about that the Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages unconsciously and as it were by accident retained that fundamental orientation toward Plato which today is again being ascribed to the historical Aristotle, after the scholars, both in modern times as well as in the Middle Ages, had been misled — by a fault of which Aristotle himself was guilty as a result of his constant polemic against Plato — into seeing in him only an antithesis of Plato.

**The philosophy of identity.** Through Proclus, Neo-Platonism be-

came an identity-philosophy. No longer is one thing derived from another, but *a priori* there is only the One (the Absolute), and this becomes everything by reason of the fact that it enters upon a triadic or trivalent process. First of all, this One is conceived of as being in the state of repose (*μονή*), then it begins to evolve itself into the many (multiplicity) (*πρόοδος*), so that it may again return to its starting point (*ἐπιστροφή*). The whole is a perfect panlogism after the manner of Hegel. The fundamental concepts of Neo-Platonism are bolstered and become more firmly entrenched and in certain instances are finally surpassed: for example, the method of inserting middle beings (or mediators) so as to bridge the gaps in order to effect transitions. This typical Neo-Platonic tendency is greatly exaggerated by Proclus. Between the One and the Nous there stand the "superessential numbers," the henads. Even the Nous itself is again divided into three classes: the intelligible (being), the intellectual (speculation), and the intelligible-intellectual (life). These are the later intelligences of which the Middle Ages knew so much. Each of these three classes is again divided into triads; the third group is again broken down into seven parts (*Hebdomadae*), and these are again split into inferior *hebdomadae*, and so on to the very end. Thus original life is frozen into a schematism—the fate of all life, and also the fate of the spirit of all philosophical schools.

Neo-Platonism had, however, finished its task. What the Fathers of the Church, the Scholastics, and modern times have drawn from it in the way of inspiration is enormous. We need only to quote the names of such scholars as Boethius, St. Augustine, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Scotus Eriugena, the school of Chartres, Nicholas of Cusa, the Cambridge Platonists, Schelling, and Hegel, in order to form an accurate estimate of the importance of this last great ancient system of philosophy. The Neo-Platonists exercised an immediate influence on the epoch which now begins, an epoch that appropriates to itself the philosophical heritage of the ancients, namely, the age of the Church Fathers. After the Neo-Platonic schools at Athens were finally closed in 529 (and although many Neo-Platonists believed that they had to do battle with youthful Christianity) it was in Christianity, in the Church, that the Neo-Platonic spirit could continue to live.



# PART II

## MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 1. NOTION OF MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

**Historical.** What the philosophy of the Middle Ages was may be defined in terms of time or chronology as that philosophical speculation of the West which dominated the period between the close of antiquity, which is linked by historians with the downfall of the Roman Empire of the West (476), and the beginning of the so-called modern era, which scholars are accustomed to date either from the conquest of Constantinople (1453) or from the beginning of the Reformation (1517). Scholars sometimes classify all mediaeval philosophy as Scholastic philosophy. True Scholasticism, however, begins only in the ninth century. What took place before this may be called the gradual preparation for Scholastic philosophy by way of the speculative activity of the Fathers of the Church. We shall, consequently, divide the philosophy of the Middle Ages into two fairly large periods: (a) the philosophy of the Patristic period and (b) the philosophy of Scholasticism.

**Essential.** If we should wish to stress the specific attribute of mediaeval philosophy in terms of its intrinsic nature, that is, in terms of its spiritual content, we would describe it as that philosophical speculation of the West which from the time of St. Augustine—and especially from St. Anselm of Canterbury—was animated by the principle: Know so that you may believe, believe so that you may know—*Intellige ut credas, credere ut intelligas* (St. Augustine, *Sermo 43*, c. 7, n. 9). Philosophy, which hitherto had sought to wrestle with the great problems of the world, of man, and of God solely by the light of unaided natural reason, is in this period combined with religious faith. Faith together with philosophy is a phenomenon

which in this era is also characteristic of Arabian and Jewish philosophy.

The combination of faith and knowledge in its impact on the speculation of the mediaeval Christian man can be understood only on the assumption of an ideological unity. Upon it rests the genius and the spirit of the entire epoch and nothing is more significant of it than precisely its spiritual unity. As never before in any period in the history of philosophy there prevailed in this epoch a sense of security, a certitude, in relation to the existence of God, His wisdom, power, and goodness; to the origin of the world, its purposive arrangement, and its providential rule; to the nature of man and his place in the universe; to the purpose of his life, the capacity of his soul to acquire a knowledge of being, and the form of his own existence; to his essential nobility, freedom, and immortality; to the foundation of rights, the origin of civic power, and the purpose of history. Unity and order were indeed signs of the times. Whereas the present day busies itself with investigating how order and law are possible and how they are able truly to coexist, in the Middle Ages order was looked upon as a matter of course and the philosopher's task was simply to recognize it wherever it was to be found.

After a few uncertain steps at the very beginning of the Patristic period, the Middle Ages found its bearings and stuck close to them to the very end. There is no doubt that the Christian religion was responsible for this unity. If anywhere, then certainly here it is true that, as Karl Jaspers says, "up to the present religion has, certainly with the help of reason, effected a most enduring and substantial order, not it is true through direct precepts, but by means of believing peoples, their earnestness and their fidelity."

**Philosophy or theology?** Scholars have oftentimes asked whether or not we are dealing with genuine philosophy in the Middle Ages, since reason ceased to be the supreme master and was forced to seek guidance from religion — a subordination, as has often been said, demanded by this marriage of philosophy and religion. Philosophy was no longer compelled to solve its own peculiar and special problems; their solutions had already been offered by faith. Philosophy was forced to rest on the basis of faith. Upon this foundation philosophy had to perform its tasks; and it oftentimes happened that philosophical speculation was required to render assistance to the deposit of faith by proof and argument, by scientific analysis and synthesis. "Philosophy, the handmaid of theology" runs the frequently

cited phrase of Peter Damian which strikes the keynote of the period. In short, philosophy was not "without its assumptions," and precisely for this reason it might appear doubtful whether the Middle Ages possessed a genuine philosophy, a philosophy worthy of the name.

1) *Philosophical life.* Such views pose questions and pass judgment very summarily. They took root in a period in which men looked upon the Middle Ages as the "Dark Ages," and nothing more. In those days the history of philosophy had little either to narrate or to report on the period. Today, as the result of the researches of Denifle, Ehrle, Baeumker, M. De Wulf, Grabmann, Mandonnet, Gilson, and others, we have become conscious that the philosophical contributions of the Middle Ages were much more extensive, much more vivid, and much more individual than scholars had previously led us to believe. Instead of being guided by commonly held opinions, we would be in a better position to form a more correct view and judgment if we should examine both the published and the unpublished sources. By so doing we would soon discover in practice that the Middle Ages were not at a loss as how to deal with essential philosophical problems in accordance with genuine philosophical tenets and methods.

2) *Spiritual freedom.* It is, furthermore, an accepted fact that mediaeval men were in principle free to pursue their own speculation and to do their own research. Pope Innocent III offered a solution for the problem: Whether it would be possible for a true believer who possessed better knowledge of the facts to refuse to obey his superiors? He laid down a rule of thumb to be followed in matters of personal conviction and freedom: "'Wherever there is a bad conscience there is sin' (*Rom.*, 14, 23; Knox trans.), and what is done against the dictate of conscience leads to hell. A man may not obey a judge if he is against God, but should rather permit the excommunication to be pronounced against himself." This decision of the Supreme Pontiff was incorporated into Canon Law (*Corp. iuris can.*, II, 286). St. Thomas Aquinas, and with him a great number of Scholastics, taught that a person excommunicated as a result of erroneous assumptions should rather die under the bann than obey the precept of his superiors which he knew was contrary to the facts of the case, "for this would be against his own personal truthfulness" (*contra veritatem vitae*) which we may never surrender even to avoid a possible scandal (*In IV. Sent.*, dist. 38, expos. text. in fine). This should not be too surprising; it is only an application of the old doctrine concerning an erroneous conscience, which a man

must always follow—a doctrine which in principle signified a sanctioning of personal freedom.

3) "*Freedom from assumptions.*" If the mediaeval man failed to make any appreciable use of his freedom, if in certain respects he actually followed the assumptions of his own personal ideology and of public opinion, he did so not because he had bowed to external pressure but simply because he did not consider as an assumption what appears to us moderns to be such. His "bondage" in a union of an ideological and religious nature was in reality only a "bias." For this reason, to ridicule mediaeval man and consequently to reject his philosophy as spurious would be justified only if we moderns did not ourselves suffer from the same defects, and only if we ourselves could philosophize without such assumptions. Many have believed this to be true for themselves. When in the first third of the present century it was proved that this belief was itself an assumption, the pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction, and scholars began to embrace a general relativism: they despaired of the possibility of ridding themselves of such assumptions and demanded peremptorily their acceptance for the sake of "character," thus making a virtue of necessity. To reject the Middle Ages because of these presuppositions as "not without assumptions" is in any case paradoxical, but it has been done.

As a matter of fact, this "freedom from assumptions" could never have been verified. But it has always remained as an ideal; it must be sought after for the sake of truth. The mediaeval philosophers were possessed of such a striving. They also attempted to divest themselves of all self-deception and to arrive at objective truth. Who actually advanced this objective farthest, they or we, future ages alone will be able to judge. In any case we must exercise caution in evaluating the Middle Ages, since we ourselves are constantly being made aware of the fact that modern mass-man is both in his speculation and in his sentiments oftentimes more "mediaeval" than the mediaeval man himself. The modern philosopher is a child of his age; consequently he may even fall under the wheels of its fate, notwithstanding the fact that the history of philosophy can readily assign the age to which any given philosopher actually belongs, and this not for any superficial reasons. Our task is therefore to strive constantly to take pains. This objective was aimed at also by the mediaeval philosopher and as a result his speculation was genuine philosophy.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

In any event, present-day philosophy is spawned by the modern era and it feels and acts as if it were something different, something genuinely novel. Does mediaeval philosophy have any meaning for us today? Indeed it does. First of all, the Middle Ages bridge antiquity and modern times. These Ages did not only copy the old codices and thereby preserve both the knowledge and the art of antiquity, but also in their schools they kept alive the continuity of philosophical problems. The fundamental themes — those concerning substance, causality, reality, finality, universality and individuality, sensory reality and the realm of phenomena, understanding and reason, soul and spirit, world and God — did not emerge only with humanism and the Renaissance, nor did they come directly from antiquity; they were bequeathed to modern philosophy by the Middle Ages. We cannot read Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz or Locke, Wolff or even Kant, without understanding mediaeval notions, concepts, and problems. In fact, where the antithesis is brought out into the open and where novelties are sought by conscious effort, frequently this other can be fully and correctly appreciated only if we see how the old thesis finds acceptance in one form or another in the antithesis and perhaps even becomes creative. Finally, the Middle Ages is in many respects exemplary: formally by reason of the logical acuity and the absolute stringency of its thought processes and the objective character of its concept of science, according to which the person inevitably takes up a position behind the thing; materially, by reason of its sound knowledge of man, which protected it against those extravagances which are so typical of modern philosophies and which permitted it to follow that direct line it guarded so faithfully for so many centuries. Not only did its doctrine of the natural law experience a "perpetual rebirth," but also its philosophical axioms concerning substance, reality, the soul, truth, the rights of man, the essence of the state, etc., enshrined such valuable treasures of thought, that we are able with justice to designate the fundamental content of mediaeval philosophy as the *philosophia perennis*.

True, we cannot return to the Middle Ages as to a paradise lost. These Ages are and always will remain of the past. But we must have a feeling for the eternally true that was contained in them and must try to make this clear to our own age in ever new form and

in conformity which changed circumstances. As Maritain says, "We hope that in a new world and in the formation of a new material, there may be evident those spiritual principles and eternal norms, by which mediaeval culture in its best periods presented a unique historical accomplishment — even in fact of its appreciable shortcomings — in fact, achieved a sublime greatness, but which has inevitably disappeared."

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## SECTION 1. PHILOSOPHY OF THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

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### CHAPTER 13

#### YOUTHFUL CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTS ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

When Christianity made its appearance, it sought to present both theoretical truth and a practical course of human conduct. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," declared its Founder. Truth is considered as absolute and eternal because it is not only human but it is also divinely revealed. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mt. 24:35). And this practical formation of life, "the way and the life," is absolutely certain, not involved in wavering or doubt; it leads unconditionally to eternal salvation. Ancient philosophy could not offer such security; it had never thought of itself as the Incarnation of the Logos and of Eternal Wisdom Itself; it had sought only to be a love for wisdom.

Antiquity had, however, attempted to offer truth and to present mankind with a guide to correct conduct. This it had done from the very beginning and especially in the Hellenistic period when ancient mythology was shattered and in its stead philosophy compelled to function as a cure for souls. From this partly similar, partly dissimilar attitude, from this identity of purpose, and from this differentiation in the choice of ways and means to a common end, we can better discern the position of youthful Christianity in relation to ancient philosophy: on the one hand the latter is rejected, on the other hand accepted.

##### 1. ST. PAUL

This was true even of St. Paul. At one time he expressed contempt

for "the wisdom of the world" and at other times again he recognized the validity of its claims and appealed to its testimony for the substantiation of his own case. In 1 Corinthians he writes: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject. Where is the 'wise man'? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputant of this world? Has not God turned to foolishness the 'wisdom' of this world? . . . The Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks look for 'wisdom'; but we for our part preach a crucified Christ—to the Jews indeed a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:19 f.). In Romans, however, we read: "Seeing that what may be known about God is manifest to them. For God has manifested it to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made" (1:19). By such statements the rights of natural reason are fully recognized. In his speech at the Areopagus, St. Paul goes so far as to cite Greek philosophers as proofs for his Christian thesis (Acts 17:28).

## 2. THE FATHERS

**Negative attitude.** This course of action reappeared among the first ecclesiastical writers. St. Justin Martyr was discontented with ancient philosophy and with the ancient philosophical schools: the Stoics knew nothing of God; the Peripatetics were too avaricious; the Pythagoreans, too theoretical; the Platonists, too daring in their utterances—only for Christians had truth become a reality, for they knew how to die for it. Minucius Felix saw in Socrates only an Attic buffoon. Tertullian considered Plato the father of all heresies. What had Athens and Jerusalem, the Academy and the Church, the infidels and the faithful to do with one another? What had they in common? he asked. Tertullian had further widened the breach between the Christian religion and ancient philosophy so that faith and reason appear in his work as the sharpest antinomies. In *De Carne Christi* he wrote: "The Son of God was crucified. We are not ashamed, because it was so shameful. The Son of God died. This is truly credible, because it is so foolish (*prorsus credible est, quia ineptum est*); and having been buried, He rose again. This is certain, because it is impossible." These statements to which Tertullian gave voice when he was no longer a member of the Church, but

a disciple of the Montanist sect, form the ideal background for the famous axiom, *Credo quia absurdum est*. Although this formula is not truly historical, its thought content can be traced to Tertullian.

**Positive attitude.** On the other hand, Justin was not only called a martyr but also a philosopher (*philosophus et martyr*). He wished to be numbered among the philosophers because he sought to defend Christianity from the attacks of its enemies. As an apologist, he had to take a position on ground that was not only neutral but also common — ground which would be accessible to the heathen and by which he could remain in contact with them. This common, neutral ground was philosophy.

1) *The apologists.* What was true of Justin was true also of the other apologists — Minucius Felix, Aristides, Athenagoras, Lactantius, and even Tertullian. At the very end the Christians adopted even the outer accouterments and external mannerisms of ancient philosophy: the philosopher's cloak, the itinerant teachings, the Stoic-Cynic diatribe and its various derivations, the aphorism and the maxim. In addition, with great profit to their speculation they drew upon the ancient criticism of polytheism which had already been developed to a large extent by the Stoics and Epicureans.

2) *The catechetical school of Alexandria.* A second step toward philosophy was taken by the catechetical school of Alexandria. By reason of its peculiar *genius loci*, this metropolis of world-wide Hellenism burst the narrow boundaries of the past and demanded that a synthesis be made between the old and the new. Especially strong there was the tradition to which Philo had given impetus by his attempt to fuse together Old Testament religion and Greek philosophy. The renowned representatives of the school, Pantaenus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, were animated by this spirit and paid allegiance to its ideal. From Origen we appropriate the comparison which was frequently quoted later on: Just as the children of Israel when fleeing from Egypt took with them the golden and silver vessels of their adopted country, so should the Christians seize upon and use for their own ends worldly science and philosophy. Clement is responsible for an even stronger formula by which a possible relationship between faith and reason could be expressed: Philosophy is a gift of Divine Providence by which the Greeks should have been prepared for the coming of Christ much after the fashion in which the Jews had been made ready for Him by the Old Testament.

3) *The Cappadocians.* A third factor which fostered a more positive attitude on the part of Christianity toward philosophy was the stand adopted by the three famous Cappadocians: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, who utilized the entire content of Greek philosophy when they preached the Christian faith. In fact, Basil wrote a special treatise: "To a young man who would wish to avail himself of the heathen philosophy." (See text in *The Wisdom of Catholicism*, ed. A. C. Pegis, New York: Random House.)

4) *St. Augustine.* The decisive choice was made by St. Augustine. If an ancient philosopher gave voice to a concept or used a phrase to describe a doctrine that was in conformity with a truth of faith, he believed that we should not only not be ashamed but should actually appropriate it from its rightful owner and turn it to our own use—and in a twofold sense. In the first place, it would help us formally to school our own minds, so that we might arrive at greater clarity, order, and beauty both in speculation and in speech. For this there was the splendid example of Cicero, from whom St. Augustine himself had learned and borrowed so much. In the second place, philosophy should aid us to scrutinize ever more searchingly the dogmas of faith, that is to say, to help us to examine as far as possible both logically and rationally their meaning, interdependence, construction, systematization, foundations, and consequences. By means of such a procedure, there gradually arose the science of sacred theology. It was St. Augustine who formulated that phrase which was to become the *leitmotif* for the whole of mediaeval philosophy: *Intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas*—"Study the innermost recesses of being, so that you may believe, believe so that you may understand the most hidden reaches of being."

### 3. CONSEQUENCES AND PROBLEMS

The final development of the relation between religion and philosophy in favor of a positive synthesis was made possible by St. Augustine. His contribution was decisive for the whole subsequent history of the philosophy in the West. Through it faith gave rise to theology; the preaching of its doctrines became a literature, and Christianity itself a culture. The proponents of these views were not forced to retreat into the ghettos, but were able to mount the platform of the forum, to enter the lecture halls of the universities, and to become familiar with the chambers of parliament and of ministeries.

Christianity had taken its rightful place in the intellectual world. The tensions within Christian philosophy itself, however, were not in any sense relieved. The problems remained. If natural speculation and supernatural revelation were actually "diverse," did they possess nothing at all in common? The concealed antitheses raised their hydralike heads in definite and set differences; we meet them, for example, in the antidialecticians gathered around St. Peter Damian, in the various eclectic circles of mystics, as well as in their antipodes, the representatives of an autonomous culture and the antinomies of politics, and later on in the dialectical theology in which faith again became a paradox, as it once was for Tertullian. Basically the entire problem is of the kind which we have already considered in the doctrine that God is transcendent, yet may be known as the creator through the creatures of which He is the supreme author; or in the teaching that the human soul is immaterial, but is nevertheless the form of the body; or that man is included in the universal causality of the world, but his will is at the same time free. In these problems scholars have discovered a dualism and are forced to span its extremes. In a methodology of the mind which seeks to reach one objective without neglecting another at the same time, we discover the most profound uncertainties of the matter.

#### 4. SOURCES OF THE FATHERS

The acceptance of ancient philosophy was nevertheless not uniform. Not all speculative systems could be examined and evaluated as sources in exactly the same way.

**The Sceptics and Epicureans.** The contributions of the Sceptics and Epicureans were of little value. Only their arguments against the polytheism still found in the popular religions of the heathens could be pressed into service, and these only occasionally.

**Aristotle.** Aristotelianism also survived. Even though its influence was not so slight as was formerly believed, it was not of decisive importance for the Patristic period. In contrast to the biblical concept of God and of religious morality, Aristotle's idea of God was too undeveloped, and his ethics too much that of a man of the world. Evidences of his earlier works may, nonetheless, be detected in Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Augustine, Synesius. His concepts of essence, substance, and nature very early played an important role in the doctrine of the Trinity and in the Christological controversies

of the third and fourth centuries. Only at the end of the Patristic era, however, was the rich heritage of Aristotelian speculation fully recognized and properly evaluated by John Philoponus and John Damascene. The former wrote commentaries for many of Aristotle's works. These were translated into Syrian. The Syrian Nestorians sought to defend with Aristotelian concepts their heresy that there were two persons in Christ because He had two natures, and the Syrian Monophysites their heresy that there was only one nature because Christ was but one person—arguments which did not endear Aristotle to the Fathers of the Church.

**Stoics.** The Stoics, on the other hand, wielded a very great influence on the thought of infant Christianity, directly through Seneca and Epictetus, and indirectly through such Roman eclectics as Cicero and Varro. Ambrose copied Cicero's work *On Duties* (*De Officiis*); Clement of Alexandria quoted entire passages from Musonius Rufus; in his own speculation Augustine used such fundamental concepts as the doctrine of eternal law, of the *rationes seminales*, and of a theocratic state. So strong was this contact with the Stoics that the people of the era were able to fabricate a legend of a correspondence carried on between St. Paul and Seneca.

**Plato.** The Platonists appear to be a first-class source upon which the Christians drew. "No one has ever approached us as closely as did these," ventured St. Augustine. Their sane ethics, their renunciation of this world, their preference for the supernatural and for the world of ideas and metaphysics, their eschatology, their untiring search for God aroused in Christians feelings of kinship. Their concept of the "hereafter" especially rendered the Fathers kindly disposed toward them. But they understood that "hereafter" (*ēkēi*—literally "there") of genuine Platonism in the palpably realistic sense in which it was used in the Bible. "But we look for a new heaven and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein dwells justice" (2 Pet. 3:13). It is not easy to judge how widely the works of Plato were quoted and how far his thoughts were incorporated into the *florilegia* or general educational content of the period wherein they had been immersed for a long time. Consequently an influence is possible, even though some works are unable to be identified directly or cited as such. The method of compiling citations which has been and is customary in the history of literature is not enough to give us an insight into the extent of Platonism's influence on the metaphysics, religious thought, and oratory of Hellenism, for as Reitzenstein ob-

serves, "Plato had created for the entire subsequent period a hieratic language and by means of it exercised a tremendous influence." In any case, Justin, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea extensively quote authenticated passages from the various works of Plato: the Dialogues such as the *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Gorgias*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, *Menexenos*, *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Laws*, *Epinomus*, as well as from his *Letters*. Methodius not only cited but also imitated in detail the *Symposium* and in like fashion St. Gregory of Nyssa imitated the *Phaedo*. St. Jerome chided the Latins because they borrowed so sparingly from Plato. But the *Timaeus* was available to them in the translations of Cicero and of Chalcidius, if they were unable to read it in the original. St. Augustine quoted from the *Phaedo*, for which he no doubt used the translation of Apuleius, who supplied him with the essentials of Plato's teachings through his prolific output of works, especially his *De Deo Socratis* and *De Dogmate Platonis*.

**Philo.** What may well have disposed the Patristic Age favorably toward Platonism was the work of Philo of Alexandria. Using biblical theology as the starting point, he constructed many a bridge to the Stoics, the Neo-Pythagoreans, and especially to the Platonists. As Jerome pointed out, "Among the Greeks it is said that Plato may be Philo, or Philo Plato, so great is the similarity manifest in their concepts and their expressions." This is especially true of speculation on the *Logos* which had received a special impetus from Philo. To Philo we must to a great extent attribute the Platonism of Clement of Alexandria and of Origen. The latter was a reservoir of ancient wisdom drawn from a variety of sources, but especially from Platonism. Porphyry wrote of him: "Plato was Origen's constant companion, and the writings of Numenius, and Cronius, Appollophanes, Longinus and Moderatus, Nicomachus and the renowned men of the Neo-Pythagorean school were constantly in his hands. He also frequently consulted the treatises of the Stoics, Chairemon and Cornutus." Origen transmitted this Platonism colored by Philonic, Stoic, and Neo-Pythagorean sources to Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Eusebius, etc.; and among the Latins, to Marius Victorinus, Hilary of Poitiers, Eusebius of Vercelli, Rufinus, and especially Ambrose, whom Jerome called an ever abundant spring of information about Origen.

**Middle Platonists.** The better known names of so-called Middle Platonism — Plutarch of Chaeronea, Gaius, Apuleius, Albinus, Maxi-

mus of Tyre, and Numenius — opened still other gateways for Christian thought among the ancient philosophies.

**Neo-Platonists.** From these and other sources Neo-Platonism was evolved; and in turn its representatives performed a yeoman's service for Patristic philosophy. When one reads the *Enneads* of Plotinus, one is astonished at their similarity of language and thought to that of Christianity, especially at the kinship revealed in their ethical, religious, and mystical mode of life and in their inner flexibility of spirit. The *Enneads* molded to a great extent the thinking of Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Cyril of Alexandria, and especially Augustine, who read them in the translation of Marius Victorinus. Through a great many other channels, Neo-Platonism emptied its content into Christianity — through Porphyry, Iamblichus, Theodoret of Cyrene, Simplicius, Macrobius, Martianus Capella, Chalcidius, Boethius, and chiefly through Dionysius the Areopagite, by whom Proclus finally addressed Christianity. At the end stand John Philoponus and John Damascene, who were already beginning to evaluate Aristotle.

**The Neo-Pythagoreans.** The Neo-Platonic influences are oftentimes so absorbed by Neo-Pythagorean movements and tendencies, as, for example, those present in Apollonius of Tyana, Numenius, Longinus, Moderatus, Nicomachus, that it is difficult to determine precisely the source in the history of philosophy from which they derive.

## 5. SYNCRETISM?

We live in an age of syncretism, and as Bréhier says "nowhere was there greater confusion in the history of philosophy than during the first two centuries of the Christian era." An example of this is offered us in the text of Jerome on Origen that we have already cited. According to Jerome, we find in Origen everything running together, everything that the ancients sought to differentiate. In spite of this handicap, Christian speculation advanced with assurance along a pathway peculiarly its own. We can apply to the almost servile dependence of Patristic philosophy upon Greek philosophy those phrases which St. Thomas Aquinas used to describe the relation of St. Augustine to the Platonists: "Whenever Augustine, who was imbued with the doctrines of the Platonists, found in their teaching anything consistent with faith, he adopted it: and those things which he found contrary to faith he emended" (S. T., I, 84, 5).

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## CHAPTER 14

### THE BEGINNINGS OF PATRISTIC PHILOSOPHY

When we speak of Patristic philosophy we should not think, as we ordinarily would, solely of the work of philosophers who were exclusively philosophers. The philosophy of this period is rather to be found buried in the writings of pastors, preachers, exegetes, theologians, and apologists. While carrying on their work of propagating Christianity, they were compelled to touch upon problems which actually belonged to philosophy and which had naturally to be approached from the standpoint of philosophical method.

#### MEN AND WORKS

**Greeks.** These include: Aristides of Athens, with his *Apology* for Christianity written about A.D. 140; Justin the philosopher and martyr (d. c. A.D. 165), with his two *Apologies* and his *Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon*; Clement of Alexandria (d. c. A.D. 215), who wrote an exhortation to the Greeks (*Protrepticus*) and a "Miscellany of True Philosophy" (*Stromateis*); Origen (d. A.D. 253), of whose works the most important for philosophy are the *De Principiis* and *Contra Celsum*; the three Cappadocians: Gregory of Nazianzen (d. c. A.D. 390), of whom we have addresses, letters, and poems; Basil the Great, who in his *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* sketches a Christian creation of the world; and his brother, Gregory of Nyssa (d. A.D. 394), who in his great *Catechesis*, in his *Dialogue with Macrina* concerning the soul and resurrection, and in his book *On the Creation of Man* presents us with his teaching on God, man, the soul, and immortality; Nemesius of Emesa, who wrote a Christian anthropology, *On the Nature of Man* (*περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου*, c. 400), which has been mistakenly ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa; and finally, the Christian Gnostics of the second and third centuries after Christ such as Basilides, Valentine, Mani, Cerinthus, and Marcion, who busied themselves

with a philosophy of the Christian faith but in whom we can readily detect a kind of moral and "existential" philosophy.

**Latins.** These include: Tertullian (d. after A.D. 213), who railed against philosophy but who pressed it into service in his *Apologeticum*, his *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, and his work *De Anima*; Minucius Felix, who in his *Octavius* (immediately before or after the *Apologeticum* of Tertullian) defended Christian monotheism against pagan polytheism; Arnobius, who in 303 likewise confronted the heathens with philosophic arguments (*Adversus Gentes*), and in so doing was strongly influenced by Clement of Alexandria and by Cornelius Labeo, the Neo-Platonist; Lactantius, who in 304 in his *De Opificio*, written in an entirely philosophical strain, sets forth a great deal of anatomical, physiological, and psychological doctrine; somewhat later the Neo-Platonic oriented writer, Chalcidius (beginning of the fourth century), wrote his commentary on the *Timaeus* which represented the best source of Greek philosophy until the twelfth century, because in it we can find everything that was valuable and durable in antiquity — Plato and Neo-Platonism, the theories of Aristotle, Philo, Numenius, texts from Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Greek physicians, Ionian natural scientists, the Eleatics, and even Pre-Socratic atomists; Marius Victorinus, who around 350 translated along with some Neo-Platonic writings the *Categories* and the *Perihermeneias* of Aristotle as well as the introduction to Porphyry; Macrobius, with his commentary, *Somnium Scipionis* (c. 400), who gave to the Middle Ages the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation and other theories of this type of speculation, as, for example, the relation of the good and the light to being, the banishment of the soul in the body, the task of liberating the soul from the body by means of various stages of purification and union in the *vita contemplativa*; and finally, Martianus Capella, who in *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* (c. 430) bestowed upon the Middle Ages a kind of encyclopedia which preserved especially the ancient teaching on the seven liberal arts.

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The points about which Patristic philosophy revolved more and more, as around a center of crystallization, were: the relation of faith and reason, knowledge of God, the essence and activity of God, the Logos, creation, man, the soul, and the moral order.

### 1. FAITH AND REASON

**The ancient view.** The relation between faith and reason was more of an axiological than a logical problem. The novelty of Christianity as well as its fundamental attitude as a way of life brought it about that faith was conceived to be so superior to reason that it threatened to absorb it. Speculation is only the beginning; faith is the authentic way and the completion. The divine Logos includes the philosophical Logos, so that, as it was often explained, the Christians could be classified as philosophers in the truest sense of the word. Christians possessed that wisdom for which the heathen philosophers had searched in vain. In order to bolster such a claim publicly, the ancient phrases of Philo that the Greek philosophers had known the Old Testament and that Plato himself was a Moses who spoke Attic Greek were repeated. There was no fundamental distinction made between faith and reason. This is clearly shown by examining them logically and in accordance with the theory of knowledge. According to H. Meyer, "A hard and fast distinction between faith and reason was foreign to the whole Patristic period as well as to St. Augustine. . . . The scholars did not seek such a division; they did not think it was either desirable or any longer possible for Christian faith." Only to a degree can we perceive a kind of break between the two, somewhat after the fashion in which we can detect a gap between the perfect and the imperfect. This view had two consequences: on the one hand, the sublimity of revealed faith was preserved intact, and on the other, the possibility of a future science of faith (theology) was in no sense jeopardized. Thus, the groundwork was laid for both a negative and a positive theology.

**Modern viewpoint.** The sharp differentiation implied in Kant's statement, "I had to push reason aside in order to make room

for faith," was not a subject open to discussion during the Patristic period. The inner life of the individual had not as yet been split into the rational and the irrational. In this period faith was still speculation — *cum assensu cogitare*, as St. Augustine will later declare — but a speculation which draws upon sources other than unaided reason. By such a view the modern problematic is indeed sketched, but it is in no sense completed. Only within Gnosticism, which in certain respects exhibits many modern features, do we gain the impression that this problematic will eventually be introduced.

## 2. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Reflection on the foundations and the possibility of knowing God lay always close to the surface in the thinking of the Patristic age. The key to it is offered us by St. Paul in Romans, 1:19, where we are told that man is able to know of the existence of God not only by faith but also "by nature," i.e. "through the things that are made." The philosophy of the Stoics with its doctrine of universal fundamental notions supplied the necessary philosophical terminology. St. Justin had already appropriated it, as had St. Clement of Alexandria, and even the great Cappadocians understood the Stoic concept of the *sensus communis*. In face of the order and beauty manifest in the world, this *sensus* naturally begot the idea of a divine architect as the cause of such harmony. Teleological and causal ideas led them to assume the existence of God.

## 3. THE ESSENCE OF GOD

As far as the essence of God is concerned, it was maintained from the very beginning that man can best define God by declaring what He is not (negative theology) rather than by stressing what He is. As a consequence, scholars early began to philosophize about the possibility of applying to God the notions which we draw from the sensible world of reality. These men recognized His transcendency, but they perceived it with a Neo-Platonic eye, as is evident in St. Clement, who calls God the One, but at the same time assures us that He far surpasses the One and the Unique.

Tertullian even found it difficult to present God other than materially. God is indeed a spirit. But is not all reality, so he asks in imitation of the Stoics, in the last instance in some fashion or another of a material nature? The Manichaeans conceived Him as something material, namely, as a luminous body — an opinion which

the young Augustine shared. But Origen answered this objection by pointing out that the Eternal God is neither mutable nor changeable as is the material world, and that He, both as spirit and as unextended, is not confined to any one place. As a consequence He is indivisible and hence cannot be of a corporeal nature. With the Cappadocians, the immateriality and the transcendency of God appear as fully accepted and received doctrines and are held most tenaciously. Very early, despite the inroads of a negative theology, we are confronted with a whole series of definite and precise predication concerning God, namely, the knowledge of His uniqueness, of His eternity, of His absoluteness, of His infinity, and of His omnipotence. Of this last Origen noted that it is not referable to anything hateful, unjust, or evil, and not to anything that is contrary to nature, but only to whatever is above and beyond nature.

#### 4. CREATION

A special and specifically Christian problem was the concept of creation. This problem became very acute because of the account of creation contained in the Bible. How may we interpret this account philosophically?

**Ideas.** Under Platonic influence, St. Clement of Alexandria recognized that exemplary ideas formed the groundwork for creation and made possible the realization of the intelligible world, *mundus intelligibilis*. But he differed from Plato and Neo-Platonism in that, in conformity with the biblical narrative, he introduced the concept of creation as a production out of nothing, which took place in time as the result of an act of the divine will.

**Time.** But it was precisely the time element which afforded such difficulties that its proponents became irresolute and vacillating when they taught the doctrine of creation out of nothing. Some championed an eternal creation but only insofar as the divine act of the will is concerned, whereas its realization took place in time. This was the view of St. Clement. Others held that not only the will-act but also the world itself were eternal, in the sense that ever new worlds are constantly arising and disappearing from eternity to eternity. This was Origen's view. In this concept it is evident that Aristotle's influence is paramount. Others maintained that time began only with this world, whereas the creative act itself is timeless. Accordingly, we have, on the one hand, worlds such as those of immaterial beings which have nothing at all to do with time; and on the other hand,

our time which is transposed to the order of eternity because time cannot begin in the temporal order, without our falling into an infinite regress. This was the opinion of St. Basil.

**Nothing.** But there is no indecision in connection with creation out of nothing. In fact, by the time of Origen this concept had been so thoroughly developed that he offered demonstrative proof of creation out of nothing, in contradistinction to the traditional view of all Greek philosophy. By this proof he presented a specific and lasting philosophical conception which would remain not only a characteristic but also a prized possession for the whole of Christian speculation.

**Simultaneous creation.** The concept of simultaneous creation is also typical. According to this, God, despite the biblical account of six days (*Hexaemeron*), created the whole world with all its riches and its manifold variety at one time—a conviction that is linked with that idealistic morphology contained in Platonism and its doctrine of the eternity of forms. According to this morphology, becoming and developing never produce anything entirely new but only effect the realization of forms already present. This teaching is found in a characteristic fashion in St. Clement, Origen, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Augustine, that is to say, in those thinkers who fostered doctrines akin to Platonism.

### 3. THE LOGOS

In this era, in connection with the doctrine of creation we can always discover some teaching on the Logos. In antiquity the whole world spoke of the Logos, so that we can describe it as something of a catchword. In heathen philosophy this was true: Philo lent the weight of his personality to the trend. From the time St. John the Evangelist had disposed the heathen world for the concept by his Gospel of the Son of God, the idea had, so to speak, been sanctioned by the Christians.\*

**The Logos and God.** In essence we find the following notes attached to the concept of the Logos: At one time the Logos is considered to be the sum total of those ideas with which God thinks of Himself. In Philo these ideas, which in genuine Platonic philosophy formed

\* During recent years much new research into the development of the concept of Logos has been stimulated by the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among the many valuable works on these Scrolls and the light they shed on biblical, religious, and philosophical topics, one of the most readable is found in R. E. Murphy, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1956), especially pp. 64-65.

a world of objective, immanent, and impersonal truths, had developed into the notion of a personal God. These ideas, then, mirror the entire essence of God and in Him we find their source. The Logos is the eternal wisdom of God in which He thinks of Himself; the Logos is the Word through which God expresses Himself; the Logos is consequently considered as the Son of God in whom God begets Himself again.

**The Logos and the world.** The Logos is brought into relation also with creation. He is its original exemplar, its arrangement, and its law of development. Just as in the *Timaeus* the world is created by the Demiurge by means of the eternal ideas, so here everything that is created owes its creation to the Logos. Whatever of reason and of law we find in the world proceeds from the Logos. For this reason the world is not utterly strange to God; on the contrary, it is His reflection and we can interpret it in terms of His footprints and as a path that leads to God Himself. The Logos bridges the chasm between God and the world as the Neo-Platonic middle beings had been designed to do.

**The Logos and man.** In still a third respect the Logos has a meaning for man. He is for him the original exemplar of the spiritual ideal, the moral measure of duty which elevates man above the sheer worldly and all too human and unites him to God. All the later teaching concerning the divine in man, concerning conscience as the voice of God or as a divine standard or rule, concerning the sparks of the soul is in fact sketched out for us in these conceptions.

**The Logos and becoming.** Finally, the concept of the Logos signifies the beginning of a theory of evolution. The contents of the Logos are seedlike tendencies or predispositions (*λόγοι σπερματικοί*), as the Stoics had already declared. According to St. Justin these are truths of Christianity already present in heathen philosophy. In Christianity these seeds would reach their full growth, but in essence they had always been present in it, so that we can with full justice give the title *Christian* to heathen philosophers. In such a concept the Logos again indicates a unitive role. Not only in the history of philosophy but also in the development of all things, the Logos sketches the outlines of all progress. "The Logos encompasses within Itself all beginnings, all forms and all orders of creatures," declares Origen (*De Principiis*, I, 22). Since for him the Logos is the Second Person in the Godhead, it is evident that Origen laid the groundwork for

that renowned teaching, *lex aeterna*, which through Augustine has become the common heritage of Christian speculation.

## 6. MAN

**Royal creature.** Patristic philosophy devoted special attention to man. Nemesius (*De Natura Hominis*, c. 532; *P. G.*, Vol. XL) summarized the essentials of this teaching in his *Panegyricus*. Man is a royal creature. In the gradations of being which both St. Gregory of Nyssa and Nemesius considered to be stratified in inorganic bodies, plants, and men, man stands at the apex. Only the angels surpass him. Man completes the visible material world because he recapitulates within himself all other beings below him. Thus, he is actually a world in miniature, a microcosm. He was created according to the image of God; then, as a consequence of his participation in the Logos, he is akin to the mind and spirit of God, so that he is able in a way to understand the divine essence by considering himself, especially if he has succeeded in liberating himself from the flesh and lives entirely according to the spirit.

**Middle being.** Man belongs to a still more sublime kingdom, standing as a mediator between the sensory and the spiritual. We can, moreover, recognize his intermediate position between good and evil: Man can choose either the sensory-material or the supernatural-spiritual world, and by his choice either fall to the earth or become a "heavenly man."

**Freedom.** Precisely for this reason we know that man is free (*αὐτεξόνωτος*, "subject to his own power"), that he possesses self-determination and is by nature not subservient to any other power. Origen and, in dependence on him, Gregory of Nyssa explain that man may abuse his freedom to perform evil because man's being is created, contingent. Whereas God possesses the reason for His Being in Himself and as a consequence is necessary and immutable, created beings have had a beginning and hence are mutable. In this mutability, grounded in the essential contingency of the creature, we possess the metaphysical reason for evil. Another teaching that has oftentimes been propounded since the days of Origen is one patently influenced by the biblical narrative, namely, that the mortality of man as well as his sexuality are the result of sin.

## 7. THE SOUL

**Its essence.** In man the subject of most interest has always been the

soul. In the Patristic period man was viewed first of all as a soul. But what is the soul? Tertullian encountered difficulties when he attempted to define it; he considered it to be nothing more than a body, corporeal matter, though of a finer quality.

1) *Body or spirit?* The reflections of the Stoics were among the decisive elements with regard to this question. Another was the consideration: How can sensation, which is corporeal in nature, affect the soul? In Origen it was already clear that the soul is a spirit; it is akin to God. St. Gregory of Nyssa proved the immateriality of the soul by means of man's thinking and planning. These are spiritual activities, so that the seat of these activities, the *Nous*, must also be immaterial.

2) *Substance or form?* The unity, individuality, and substantiality of the soul are stressed in Patristic philosophy more strongly than they were in Greek philosophy. As St. Gregory of Nyssa states, "The soul is a created, living, rational substance which of itself bestows upon an organic and sensitive body the power of life and of perception, as long as the nature which is capable of supporting it perdures in existence" (*Macr.*, 29 B). As a consequence, Nemesius was opposed to the doctrine that would divide the soul into vegetative and sensitive parts, for these would be only potencies of the rational soul and would not adequately represent the soul in itself as the principle of life, as Plato and Aristotle conceived it to be. He is also adverse to the Aristotelian description of the soul as an *entelechy*, because this would reduce it to a mere quality or form of the body, and would not delineate it as something existing by itself and possessing independence (*De Nat. Hist.*, 564). A very keen observation! Actually within the *Peripatos* of Aristotle it was definitively proved that Aristotle had not conceived of a substantial soul, as we have already seen. Some critics have said that scarcely any other Christian philosopher before Nemesius revealed in such a manner the weakness of the Aristotelian concept of the soul or recognized the impossibility of reconciling it with the Christian notion. We are acutely aware that in Christian speculation the soul was thought to be more than a form. When later the soul is described as the form of the body, we must understand that this notion must be conceived in a much more substantial sense than it had been by Aristotle. This notion must be taken rather in the meaning of the Platonic *eidos*, which alone can be considered a

substance. It would be well worthwhile to make an intensive study to determine how much this revision of the notion of form, taken in connection with the teaching on the soul, influenced the Middle Ages.

*3) Body and soul.* As the soul becomes more and more substantial, more and more a substance, the difficulty of explaining its relation to the body becomes greater and greater. How can unity be preserved by it and through it? We would gladly avoid the dualism which would necessarily be induced by an approximation to Platonism. In this period the doctrine that the soul has been condemned to dwell in the body as a punishment for its previous sins is no longer advanced as true, although Origen continued to propose it. Such pessimism was not in conformity with Christian teaching, for it was recognized as Christian doctrine that everything possessing a body had been created by God. The soul was not limited to possessing the body as a garment, says Nemesius, for then we would again have no genuine unity. Like Gregory, he was firmly convinced and vigorously maintained that the body was the instrument of the soul, that the soul has a tendency to be joined to a body as the lover is to his beloved. In this way he advanced the cause of dualism. This was like Plato and the younger Aristotle.

**Origin of the soul.** Special problems were encountered in the doctrine concerning the origin of the soul. Scholars groped uncertainly in several directions. Sometimes they leaned toward generationism or traducianism, according to which the soul is begotten by the parents and is the offshoot (*tradux*) of their life (the view of Tertullian and St. Gregory of Nyssa). At other times they seemed to incline in favor of creationism, according to which the soul was created solely by God (the view held by St. Clement, Lactantius, St. Hilary, and a majority of the Fathers). At still other times they stanchly advocated the pre-existence of souls and linked this theory with the assumption of creationism by teaching that the soul was created from all eternity (the view of Origen and Nemesius).

**Immortality.** From the very beginning Patristic thinkers evidenced clarity in their teaching on the immortality of the soul. In this teaching, the Christian viewpoint is seen to be in sharp opposition to ancient philosophy, insofar as it taught that this immortality was unconditionally individual and thereby showed that we can no longer be satisfied with a universal divine *Nous*.

## 8. MORALITY

**The good.** Nowhere can we so easily discern the synthesis of Hellenism and Christianity as in ethics, in which Plato and the Stoics appear as the forerunners, as it were, of Christianity. Plato urged men to become like to God. The same cry is raised in the Bible: "You therefore are to be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). In order to give a philosophical basis to their ethics, the scholars had recourse to a Platonic motif: The life of man and his way of life are traced for him by the Logos. This Logos of which he wrote is the divine Logos. As Origen declared: "There is no other Logos than Christ, the Logos of God, who is with the Father and by whom all things were made; and there is no other life than the Son of God who says: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'" St. Clement writes that the Stoic moral formula which is comprised by the phrase "right reason" denoted nothing more than the divine Logos; it is the order of nature with which we must be in accord. And when St. Gregory of Nyssa recognized that man's purpose in life was to share in the archetype of all good, in God, what is possible through this is the fact that the human spirit contains all those goods which are proper to the divine spirit, even though they are only copies, sheer imitations. Just as the sun is reflected in the mirror, so in this conception Platonism and Platonic doctrine unmistakably reappear. Precisely how much Stoic philosophy contributed in particular to the development of Christian moral doctrine is well known. Lactantius, however, realized that the objective moral law is not unequivocally established by recourse to either the nature or to the reason of man.

**Conscience.** Only when there is a question of a better nature, that nature of which we become aware by means of our consciousness of value and of our conscience, are we able to perceive the moral good in a life that is lived in accord with the dictates of nature. Stoic philosophy had already touched upon this topic. Epictetus possessed the notion of conscience (*Syneidesis*), as had Philo; it was Cicero, however, who introduced the term *conscience* into philosophical terminology. St. Paul himself had drawn his notion from popular Stoic philosophy then current. Under the influence of these stimuli, a prominent place was accorded conscience in morality by the Fathers of the Church. To them conscience is the subjective expression of the objective moral law and at the same

time the voice of God. As St. Gregory of Nazianzen said, "In all things permit me to be counselled by reason and the judgment of God. Often I will be convinced by it even when no one raises an accusing finger at me. By it I will be liberated, even when many condemn me. No one can escape this court, which has its tribunal within us; we should not fail to heed it and by it we should strike out upon the right road in life."

## CHAPTER 15

### ST. AUGUSTINE, TEACHER OF THE WEST

St. Augustine is the embodiment of Patristic wisdom. As Grabmann points out, "Patristic influence upon mediaeval philosophy is synonymous with the continued existence and the continued influence of St. Augustine on the Middle Ages." That we are able to give him the title "Teacher of the West" proves that his greatness was not limited to the Middle Ages. He is one of the pillars of Christian philosophy for all time. In Gilson's words, "With St. Augustine we reach the apex of Patristic and perhaps of all Christian philosophy."

#### LIFE

More than ordinarily, in the case of St. Augustine we find that human and natural antecedents play an important role in an understanding of his thought. Over and over again he discloses the temperament with which he was endowed by his Punic blood, the stanchness of his Roman will, and especially the nobility of that heart to which nothing human was foreign but which never became fixed on the plane of the sheerly human.

St. Augustine was born at Tagaste in 354, the son of a heathen father and a Christian mother. The victim of the spirit and the morals of his age, he spent anything but an uneventful youth. While speaking of his days as a student of rhetoric at Carthage, he tells us: "following the normal order of study I had come to a book of Cicero. . . . That particular book is called *Hortensius* and contained an exhortation to philosophy. Quite definitely it changed the direction of my mind, altered by prayers to You, O Lord, and gave me a new purpose and ambition. Suddenly all the vanity I had hoped in I saw as worthless and with an incredible intensity of desire I longed after immortal wisdom. I had begun that journey upwards by which I was to return to You. . . . How did I then burn, my God, how did I burn to wing upwards from earthly delights to

You . . . For with You there is wisdom. Now love of wisdom is what is meant by the Greek word philosophy, and it was to philosophy that that book set me so ardently" (*Conf.*, III, 4; ed. Sheed, p. 45).

It was also in Carthage that he succeeded in ridding himself of Manichaeanism, but not without first replacing it by another system of thought. This time it was that scepticism represented chiefly by Cicero and the Young Academy. But when he left Rome, where he had been a rhetorician—he remained a rhetorician throughout his entire life and we may not overlook this fact when we interpret his statements—and took up his residence at Milan, where he became acquainted with the "writings of the Platonists," he reached the conclusion that in addition to the material world there was also an ideal world. For the first time he also realized that, contrary to what the Manichaeans had taught, God must necessarily be immaterial.

To climax everything, through the oratory of Ambrose, he became familiar with the mentality and spirituality of Christianity, and experienced a fundamental inner conversion. With some friends he withdrew (382) to a farm at Cassiciacum in the neighborhood of Milan, pondered over the new world of ideas he had acquired, gave concrete expression to his impressions by a series of works, reduced his life to order, and was finally baptized by Ambrose in 387. A year later he returned to Tagaste and founded in his own home a kind of a monastery. He occupied his days with writing, especially with the spiritual controversy with the Manichaeans. While in Tagaste he wrote his famous treatise on the freedom of the human will, *De libero arbitrio*. In 391 he was ordained a priest, becoming Bishop of Hippo in 395. His literary output was unbelievable and for us practically inexhaustible. When the Vandals laid siege to his see, his pen was still in his hands. After his death (430), when the Roman Empire of the West had been destroyed and nothing was left behind by the Vandals save ruins, his works continued to live on with a kind of immortality. They furnish us with a primary source for our knowledge of the philosophical and religious genius of the West.

## W O R K S

The most important of his works: *Confessiones* (c. 400), his autobiography. *Contra Academicos* (386), III, a discussion of the sceptical tendencies of the New Academy. *De Beata Vita* (386), a treatise on the traditional problem of eudaemonia (true happiness). *Soliloquia*

(386), in the form of a dialogue between St. Augustine and his reason concerning knowledge, truth, wisdom, and immortality. *De Vera Religione* (388), an essay on faith and knowledge. *De Libero Arbitrio* (388-395), on the freedom of the will and the origin of evil. *De Trinitate* (400-416), a voluminous work on the relation between revelation and reason and at the same time an attempt with the aid of interior contemplation to explain the Most Blessed Trinity. *De Civitate Dei* (413-426), in twenty books, St. Augustine's masterpiece which contains a discussion of the Roman Empire of the West, which was about to disappear, and at the same time presents mankind a philosophy of universal history.

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## TRUTH

Viewed historically as well as systematically, the first problem touched upon in Augustinian speculation is truth. Is there such a thing as truth? How do we arrive at it? What is it?

### 1. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS TRUTH?

After St. Augustine had been led astray by Manichaeanism, he began to doubt about truth in general. He asked himself: Should we not exercise more caution in our speech, because we are not able to discover certain truth? And should we not content ourselves instead with “opinions” whose relativity is clear to us, as did the members of the Young Academy in their scepticism, Cicero, for example, who wished only to have magnificent “opinions”?

Augustine had, not only in this period but throughout his life, pondered on this problem of the possibility of absolute truth (*Contra Academ.*, III, 11; *Solil.*, II, 1, 1; *De Beata Vita*, II, 7; *De Lib. Arbit.*, II, 3, 7; *De Vera Religione*, 39, 72; *De Trin.*, X, 10; *De Civ. Dei*, XI, 26). His solution appears to be almost modern. He did not begin with transcendental truths as had ancient philosophy, but with the clearly given facts of experience, as Descartes will do later on. One may doubt about things beyond one’s conscious perception, but “no one can doubt about the fact that he lives, remembers, entertains opinions, thinks, knows, and judges. For when he doubts, he lives . . . when he doubts, he knows that he may not give his assent to a proposition without having a reason. Should he try to doubt about whatever else he may choose, of this final doubt he cannot doubt” (*De Trin.*, X, 10). Or, as he stated so concisely in

*De Civitate Dei*, XI, 26: "If I err, I am" (*Si enim fallor, sum*). By this theory St. Augustine uncovered a new species of truth, the truths of consciousness, and through them he believed that he had at least in principle overcome scepticism; for in them we possess that against which scepticism had in general always struggled.

## 2. NOTION OF TRUTH

In this matter St. Augustine assumes a clear and precise concept of truth: truth must always be necessary and eternal. This statement, of course, holds true only for those truths that are connected with ideal facts, facts of the ideal order, as found in a proposition such as  $7 + 3 = 10$ . Everyone who possesses the use of reason knows that this is a universally valid proposition. "I affirmed that this unchanging mathematical truth is commonly possessed by me and by any other thinking person" (*hanc ergo incorruptibilem numeri veritatem dixi mihi et alicui ratiocinanti esse communem* — *De Lib. Arbit.*, II, 8, 21). This would not be true of those things which we experience by means of concrete sense perception in connection with this or that body. We cannot be certain that they will always remain true in the future, even if they are true now. Like Plato in the *Meno* and the *Theaetetus*, so he arrived at his notion of truth in the ideal sense by means of mathematics. By this method St. Augustine had anticipated not only Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum*, but also Hume's theory of the validity of sense experience and Leibniz' distinction between factual and rational truths.

## 3. SOURCE OF TRUTH

**Sense experience.** By this concept we touch upon the problem of the source of truth. But we must understand that for St. Augustine this source is not to be found in the realm of sense experience. For one thing, the material world is contingent; the proposition of Heraclitus (material reality is in a state of flux) is endorsed not only by Plato but also by St. Augustine. The soul, furthermore, must lend, as it were, something of itself to these sense perceptions, so that it can become conscious of them and that they can have being (*Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae* — *De Trin.*, X, 5, 7). The soul does not accept these perceptions passively but devotes to them a special activity (*operationes, actiones* — *De Mus.*, VI, 5, 10). The soul possesses rules and regulations (*regulae, ideae*) for sensation as such, which are kinds of standards, as we can see, for example, in the idea of

unity of which we stand in need if we wish to have sense experience. But this idea is not abstracted from sensation, for the material world does not afford us any unity in the true sense of the word, since every body is infinitely divisible (*De Lib. Arbit.*, II, 8, 22). We nevertheless need knowledge of the One, because without it we would be unable to perceive of, or to speculate on, the multiple. Consequently, sense experience is never superfluous, just as it was not purely superfluous for Plato. But the decision concerning the necessary and eternal validity of truth is not derived from sense experience.

**Mind.** St. Augustine was thereby forced to search for another source of truth. He found it in the mind of man himself. "Do not seek it without. Turn in upon thyself. In the interior of man dwells truth. And if you should find that your own nature is mutable, you must transcend yourself, you must mount above yourself" (*De Vera Religione*, cap. 39, n. 72). What is to be understood by the term, "mind"? The *apriori* functions of Kant? Surely not, for "the understanding does not create truth but finds it already existent" (*ibid.*, cap. 39, n. 73). Or the innate idea of Plato or Descartes? Not these either, since the mind for Augustine is not fully autonomous but remains ever indebted to something more sublime: "Whatever of truth the understanding possesses is not due to the understanding itself" (*De Sermone Domini in Monte*, II, 9, 32). This Father of the Church entertained rather an entirely different opinion.

**The theory of illumination.** He pictures to himself an illumination by which the truth streams from God into the mind of man (Illumination or Irradiation theory). We deal here neither with a purely supernatural illumination nor with revelation, but with something entirely natural: *omnis anima rationalis etiam cupiditate caecata, tamen cum cogitat et ratiocinatur, quidquid in ea ratiocinatione verum est, non ei tribuendum est, sed ipsi lumini veritatis, a quo vel tenuiter pro sui capacitate illustratur, ut verum aliquid in ratiocinando sentiat.* "When the rational soul, even one blinded by lust, thinks and reasons, whatever truth is contained in its reflection is to be attributed not to it [the soul] but to the very light of truth by which the soul is enlightened according to its capacity that it might grasp something of the truth in its speculation" (*ibid.*). But what does this mean? Perhaps the Bible afforded him the occasion for the use of the expression *illumination*; for the Bible describes God as that light which enlightens all men who come into the world. It also had this meaning for Plato, to whom the idea of the good permits all truths

to become visible, just as the sun renders visual all things within its rays. This meaning was shared by Plotinus, as were in general the Neo-Platonic analogies of light.

As a consequence we may not hold that St. Augustine, following only his religious convictions, calls upon God for help, like a *deus ex machina*, to bolster his doctrine of the theory of knowledge. His procedure was rather inherent in the whole Platonizing method of speculation, which always saw the perfect standing behind all imperfection. This permitted St. Augustine to perceive behind individual truths, which are only partial truths, truth itself or truth as such, just as Plato in the individual good recognized good itself. St. Augustine also presupposes concepts, rules, and eternal exemplary ideas (*ideae, formae, rationes aeternae, regulae*), which enter into the constitution of, and lay the foundation for, all truth. According to him, however, these no longer belong exclusively to the human mind by virtue of its own essence, but to a much more sublime foundation, the Divine Mind or Spirit. This Mind forms the *mundus intelligibilis*, "the intelligible world." From this world as from a starting point these ideas set the human mind into motion by means of "direct" illuminations: *nulla natura interposita*, as he expresses it (*De Mus.*, VI, 1, 1).

**Interpretations of the theory of illumination.** 1) *Ontological interpretation.* The interpretation of this divine illumination has been the subject of much debate. Many expressions of St. Augustine, *nulla natura interposita*, for example, are closely akin to ontologism or the doctrine that our reason directly contemplates the ideas in the mind of God and as a consequence arrives ultimately at the necessary, unchangeable, and eternal Truth. This is the view of Malebranche, Gioberti, Ubaghs, Hessen. To refute this interpretation we need only allege the fact that by it we would no longer need proofs for the existence of God. St. Augustine, however, frequently and expressly offers us such demonstrations. Likewise this interpretation would make sense knowledge unnecessary, whereas according to St. Augustine we stand in dire need of such knowledge. "Our mind is not capable of contemplating the things of God in their eternal exemplary causes: *in ipsis rationibus quibus facta sunt*" (*De Gen. ad Litt.*, V, 16, 34). The intuitive immediate vision of God, furthermore, is our "final end" not in "this world" but in the "next"; here upon earth we encounter intuitive vision only in the rare instances of mystical visionaries, such as Moses and Paul. For this reason such authorities on St. Augustine as Grabmann, Gilson, Ch. Boyer, Jolivet, and F.

Cayré understand by these ontological sounding phrases only figures, and not statements that are to be taken literally.

2) *Concordistic interpretation.* This view of St. Augustine may also be explained by the concordistic interpretation. This explanation reduces the divine illumination to the *intellectus agens* but at the same time attenuates it appreciably. This is the view of such scholars as Zigliara, Lepidi, Ch. Boyer, F. Cayré. This interpretation was initiated by St. Thomas Aquinas (*S. T.*, I, 84, 5), who in the *lumen intellectuale* of St. Augustine tried to see only another formulation for the *intellectus agens*. Aquinas was accustomed to say that it "irradiated" the phantasms and thus became the source of spiritual truth. This *intellectus agens* shared in the uncreated light just as all created beings participate in the First Cause, which preserves all things in existence and co-operates everywhere and with everything. As Portalié has so correctly maintained, however, we should hold that God and not man assumes the role of the *intellectus agens*, if we wish to do justice to St. Augustine.

3) *The historical interpretation.* The historical interpretation seeks to understand St. Augustine through the medium of his own writings. It begins by declaring that St. Augustine sought to explain the copy of the original image by means of illumination and not, conversely, the higher by the lower, as every theory of abstraction must do, and also as must the doctrine of the *intellectus agens*, at least in its traditional Neo-Scholastic interpretation. This historical explanation is represented by such authorities as Grabmann, Gilson, and Jolivet. The last named speaks of a moderate intuitionism he found in St. Augustine. Consequently, we can maintain that St. Augustine, by his theory of divine illumination, sought to teach an epistemological apriorism as basic to his philosophy. He could not, however, refer only to supreme principles, for the eternal reasons (or types) in the mind of God are all-inclusive. We therefore must find the source for his doctrine in the general direction of his position, which was Platonism. In his literary formulation, however, St. Augustine, remaining always the vigorous orator, used rather vivid figures, *plus dicens et minus volens intelligi*, as Bonaventure was accustomed to say of him.

#### 4. THE ESSENCE OF TRUTH

We are now able to state what the essence of truth is according to St. Augustine. In general we must hold that truth is a property of our judgments; we must, furthermore, recognize its essence in the

conformity of our propositions with the objective facts of the case or the objective circumstances of a thing (logical truth). This was in Aristotle's mind when he said, to quote the mediaeval version of his views: *Verum definientes dicimus esse quod est, aut non esse quod non est* ("In defining the truth, we say that what is, is, or that what is not, is not"). St. Augustine also recognized this logical truth; in fact he started from it in his speculation. But he permitted it to recede into the background in order to clarify exactly what the source of truth actually is, namely, the eternal ideas and eternal types in the mind of God. Truth, then, consists in the conformity of things with these ideas, and these—the *rationes*, the *ideae*, the *species aeternae*—constitute the proper essence of truth. Since these ideas belong to and are God, we may say that God is truth. In such a theory truth becomes, moreover, something of the ontological order. "Truth is that which is" (*verum est id quod est*), by which the *quod est* no longer denotes the conformity of the judgment with the true facts, but with the exemplary ideas in the mind of God. In them St. Augustine detected, as had Plato before him, "true being."

## G O D

According to what has been written, the problem of God stands in closest proximity to the problem of truth. Is there a God? and what is He?

### 1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The existence of God was as well established for St. Augustine as it was for the other Fathers of the Church by reason of the fact that our concept of Him must be numbered among the fundamental notions of the mind, as the Stoics and St. Paul (Rom. 1:19) assume it to be. He furnished us, nevertheless, with several proofs for His existence.

The noological (intuitive) proof for the existence of God (proof of God from eternal truths). Of these the noological proof was the one the most dear to him. The essence of this argument can be found in *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, 3-13, and *De Vera Religione*, 29-31. His reasoning runs as follows: Man finds in the acts of his soul's spiritual life—in his thinking, feeling, willing—the eternal, immutable, and necessary truths.

1) *Absolute truth.* Man may occasionally overlook them, err con-

cerning them, or even reject them; but as judges (*judices*) and moderators (*moderatores*) of the human mind, they remain untouched by all such attitudes. These truths do not exist in time or place; here we are dealing with something entirely transcending the human, something utterly independent of man, but existing as a temporal reality within man. In the midst of imperfection we come in contact with perfection; in the midst of the relative, the absolute; in the midst of the human, the transcendental. And thus we fasten upon God: *Nec iam illud ambigendum est, incommutabilem naturam, quae supra animam rationalem sit, Deum esse; et ibi esse primam vitam et primam essentiam, ubi est prima sapientia* (*De Vera Religione*, 31, 57) ("Nor can it be doubted that that unchanging nature, which lies above the rational soul, is God, and that the first essence and first life are there where the first wisdom is"). "Just as those who are blessed with an especially strong, vivid, and healthy faculty of sight can look with pleasure at the sun itself, which floods with its rays everything in which weaker eyes take delight, so the strong and vigorous gaze of the human spirit is directed upward to truth itself, through which all truths are shown, after it has examined with sure knowledge many unchangeable truths. Our spirit by depending upon this truth forgets likewise the other truth and rejoices in the possession of the supreme divine truth which is at one and the same time both pleasure and the possession of other truths" (*De Lib. Arbit.*, II, 13, 36). In this we can discern immediately that St. Augustine had Plato's *Symposium* (210 ff.) before his eyes. We see also the standpoint in philosophical history from which a correct interpretation of the noological proof for the existence of God must begin: God is known as the Perfect One, without which the imperfect cannot be conceived; He is the original Truth and the archetypal Good, the First Cause of all truths and values—their Foundation (*ὑπόθεσις*) as Plato describes it. We do not arrive at a knowledge of God by a conclusion based on causality, in the sense that He is, as it were, the First Cause that posits the truth; no, we confront Him in the truths themselves, just as we hold within our hand good itself when we fasten upon the individual good. Although we do not grasp God in the plenitude of His being, we do grasp Him in a real and positive manner.

2) *The living spirit.* When in this concept St. Augustine comes into contact with a living, personal God, he has not made an unwarranted transition, because his point of departure has been the living personal soul. For Augustine spirit is indeed a reality demanded

by logical thought. But it is far more than this. Logical validity is only one of the many notes that belong to spirit. The whole, actual spirit is always a living spirit. And St. Augustine, in addition, saw in life, as did antiquity in general, something above and beyond mere self-motion, which of itself is non-intellectual and irrational. He saw in life an essential kinship with the Logos, which informs it and, in a special way, nourishes the life of the soul. He realized that the soul, in its life and in its actions, shared in the necessary, eternal, unchangeable truth of God. When for this reason he speaks to God in his *Confessions*: "Yet all the time You were more inward than the innermost place of my heart and loftier than the highest" (*Conf.*, III, 6; ed. Sheed, pp. 48-49); and again: "Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved Thee! For behold, Thou wert within me, and I outside; and I sought Thee outside" (*ibid.*, X, 28; ed. Sheed, p. 236); or when he calls God the Life of our life: "Your God is the Life of your life" (*ibid.*, X, 6, 20; ed. Sheed, p. 217), these are not mere rhetorical expressions, but are Platonisms and must be understood as such. We become certain of this when we examine his teaching on memory (*ibid.*, X, 18, 20). It is from Platonism that Augustine's teaching receives its importance. Precisely in this fashion is the living soul a pathway to the living God. We have here the Christian development of the Platonic dialectical approach to God.

**Other proofs.** In addition to the noetical proof for the existence of God, St. Augustine developed also the teleological, psychological, and moral proofs. For an insight into them, consult, for example, what Grabmann, *Grundgedanken des hl. Augustinus über die Seele und Gott*, offers on the subject. See also Vernon Bourke, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom*, pages 94-99.

## 2. THE ESSENCE OF GOD

**The attributes of God.** When St. Augustine speaks of the essence of God, he both appreciates and stresses the fact that the infinite God is above and beyond the comprehension of our finite intellects. *Si comprehendis, non est Deus* ("If you comprehend him, he is not God"). Precisely because of this, our concepts may be applied to God only analogically. "We must, as far as we are able, hold God to be good, without belonging to the category of quality; as immense, without pertaining to the category of quantity; as the Creator, but without need; as above all things, but without local place; as con-

taining all things, but Himself not contained; as truly present everywhere, but without a 'where,' as eternal, but without time; as a creator of all things changeable, but without undergoing any change in Himself; as free from all suffering" (*De Trin.*, V, 12). Taking these notions at their face value, God is both One and Unique; He is infinitely perfect and eternal; and especially is He Being Itself: "Everything that is in God is being" (*In Ps. 101*, serm. 2, n. 10). God is furthermore the archetypal good, that *bonum omnis boni* (*De Trin.*, VIII, 3, 4), through whom everything is good that is good or has been good. He is, finally, the First Cause of the world.

**Ideas in the Divine Mind.** All beings outside of God are only reproductions of the original exemplars (*exemplaria, formae, ideae, species, rationes*) existing in His mind. Only by participation in the Divine Being do other beings come into existence. St. Augustine is an adherent of the doctrine of ideas, but following the example of Philo, he transferred the ideas to the mind of God. They no longer form an impersonal logical world as they did for Plato, but are conceived as belonging to God. This marks a significant advance in philosophical speculation. On the one hand, the ideas now have a basis, and on the other, we are enabled to arrive at an approach which leads us to the fullness and the richness of the Divine Nature. Without falling victim to the pantheistic doctrine of emanation as advanced by the Neo-Platonists which renders all things identical, everyone can converse intelligently about God, for the whole world mirrors the richness of His innermost being, it reproduces the divine exemplars (exemplarism). Anyone who knows how to interpret their symbolism can everywhere discern divine wisdom, a thought which was a fertile source of meditation for the mystics.

## CREATION

Creation is thus a realization of the ideas which are contained in what is in itself a still richer fullness of God.

### 1. WHY?

Why did creation take place? "No better author can there be than God; no better art than His word; no better cause why, than a good God should make a good creature. And this Plato praised as the justest cause of the world's creation" (*De Civ. Dei*, XI, 21; ed. Dent, Vol. I, p. 330).

## 2. OF WHAT?

Of what was it made? In answer to this question Augustine differs from Plato. For a Christian philosopher there can be no such thing as eternal matter. He took upon himself, as a consequence, the further development of the only two other possibilities: the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation, and the Christian teaching of creation out of nothing. Since the first theory ultimately leads to the identification of the finite and contingent with the nature of God, for Augustine only creation out of nothing remained plausible; it was the theory he advanced. In this way he rejected all emanation and at the same time discarded all connection with Neo-Platonism on a point where Christian speculation can tolerate it least.

## 3. WHEN?

The "when" of creation lies in eternity, i.e., outside time. Time begins only with the creation of the material world. The question, why the world was not created earlier or later thus becomes meaningless. Such a question presupposes, by the use of the terms "earlier" and "later," that time was already in existence; but this, just as space, is present only with creation. If anyone should wish to ask: What would God have done before creation? we would answer: He has prepared a place in hell for those who want to know too much (*Conf.*, XI, 12). Or as Luther translated the original statement into German: God sat down behind a hazel bush and made switches to punish those who asked idle questions.

## 4. THE COSMIC PROCESS

**Matter.** St. Augustine explained the course of the cosmic process which began with creation by means of three factors: matter, time, and eternal forms. Matter (*Conf.*, XII, 6-8) is the substratum of all created being. Reality should not be denied created being, because in that case the idea alone would be real. In this respect the Christian philosopher was of a different mind from Plato, although he, too, was of the opinion that only the original exemplars in the mind of God are genuine and full truth and alone possess complete actuality. Imitations are only imitations, but they are realities, even though of a lesser kind. Despite this concept, matter appears to St. Augustine to be "practically nothing" (*prope nihil*). We can see very clearly how Platonism made its influence felt in later times.

However, it underwent a characteristic transformation in the hands of Christian philosophers who sought to do full justice to God's creative activity. This is a circumstance which, along with the concept of reality advanced both by Aristotle and by the Peripatetic school (cf. pp. 163 ff. and 263) and the notion of reality advocated by the Stoics, contributed essentially to the development of the mediaeval concept of reality, aside from the fact that this concept was also the interpretation of "a sane human intellect." Matter is without form, but it has the task of exhibiting the form. Although it is created out of nothing and is closely akin to nothingness, it nonetheless embodies the miraculous work of God (*fecisti mundum de materia informi, quam fecisti de nulla re paene nullam rem, unde faceres magna quae miramur*). Matter is either spiritual as in the case of the angels or corporeal as in the case of natural things. How should we conceive of such matter? It cannot possess extension as it did for Plato; otherwise it could not become the matter of angels. The pure possibility of Aristotle seems to fit the state of the question best, for it is that principle from which all else can be formed. It would however be more correct to understand it, as did St. Augustine, as something pertaining to the temporal order.

**Time.** 1) *Time and creation.* Matter existed before time (*ante omnem diem*); for where neither species nor order exist, there can be no change and hence no time. In matter, however, we find that time can appear, be experienced, and be measured, because it is by the change of things that we reckon time, and this change represents nothing other than a succession of forms in matter (*Conf.*, XII, 7). Everything made from matter belongs to the category of changeableness, of processes, and consequently also to that of time. By such a concept St. Augustine could ascribe matter even to the angels. Time and the creature are two aspects of one and the same thing.

2) *Time and eternity.* Eternity is, as a consequence, something that is entirely different from time. Eternity is without change or succession. Time is only change (*De Civ. Dei.*, xi, 6). Eternal Being is identical with its own essence; it completely possesses itself and is all at once; its duration is permanent. Temporal being is dismembered and must first possess itself and must first of all become; it possesses successive duration. In what relation to eternity creation in time does stand is truly problematical. But even time itself is somewhat of a puzzle.

3) *Time and man.* Time is experienced only in a single moment,

the present. But the present is without continuity: *praesens autem nullum habet spatium*, says St. Augustine as will Klages later on. But if it should be spread over a period, it would become divisible and because of its divisibility would have to be traversed, and then there would be a past and a future, and the moment would not be entirely this present moment (*Conf.*, XI, 15). Why are we conscious of time in the sense of something extended? Is it, perhaps, the soul which is extended by reason of its memory and its prevision? This is the answer, maintains St. Augustine. And when he names and explains the perception of time in terms of spiritual extension (*distentio ipsius animi*) and asserts that time is measured by the spirit itself, he approaches very closely to the modern notion — on this occasion to the Kantian view of time.

**Form.** 1) *Primacy of the idea.* But the most important item in the cosmic process is the form. This factor is not only at the very center of the Augustinian theory of knowledge but also at that of his metaphysics. "There are ideas. There are distinct basic forms; they are also the permanent, unchangeable essences of things. They themselves are not formed. As a consequence they remain eternally the same and are to be found in the mind of God. Whereas they themselves neither had a beginning nor will have an end, everything else is fashioned after their likeness, that is, everything else that can either begin or end and actually begins and ends" (*De Div. Quaes.*, 83, qu. 46, 2). Every created being, even matter, requires a form. Although we must conceive matter to be without a form, it has actually never existed without a form. That the species and genera of created beings are forms is quite evident. But St. Augustine appears to have been inclined to the opinion that the individual, at least every human individual, is based upon a *praeconceptio divina*. The formation of matter in creation, as still existing outside of time, took place all at once (simultaneous creation), because succession is possible only if time begins with creation. For this reason, according to Augustine, the biblical account of creation with its work of six days must be understood figuratively. In the creation of forms, however, we can at least detect this difference — many things, such as the day, the firmament, the earth, the ocean, air, fire, and the human soul, appeared immediately in their final definitive form, whereas other formed objects, such as living beings and the body of man, appeared only gradually and at the end of an evolutionary process.

2) *Seed forces (germinal reasons).* The forms are, therefore, seed

forces (*rationes seminales seu causales*) which reach maturity only after some time has elapsed. Augustine here appropriated for himself the *λόγοι σπερματικοί* of the Stoics and thereby introduced the idea of evolution into the cosmic process. This is, however, not the modern version of evolution which teaches that species as such came into existence by chance or by purely fortuitous development; it is rather the ancient concept which taught that evolution started from already existent species. This concept of evolution returns to the dialectics of Plato by way both of the Stoics and of Aristotle and in modern times by way of the dialectics of Hegel. What St. Augustine sought to stress in the cosmic process was the form and its power. By so doing he also emphasized the omniscience and the omnipotence of God. In the cosmic process, space and time can be educed and supported only from what God has begotten by the Word of His Spirit. As they were for Plato, space and time are for St. Augustine only the nurse, the place where becoming transpires. But God, however, is the Father, and from Him come both being and life.

## THE SOUL

Among the chief concerns of St. Augustine we may number his interest in the soul. "I desire with great longing to know God and my soul. Nothing else besides? No, nothing else" (*Sol.*, 1, 2, 7). The manner in which he busied himself with the soul, his profound insight, his skill in the description and classification of spiritual emotions, and his sympathetic understanding show St. Augustine as a man of rare psychological talent. What we cannot say of many modern textbooks of psychology we can without fear of contradiction maintain of his *Confessions*, that they proceed from and reveal a genuine and solid knowledge of man. He did not, however, remain immured in psychology, but he interested himself in those great philosophical problems which are connected with it. What is the relation of the soul to the body? What is the soul itself? What is its origin? What is its duration?

### 1. BODY AND SOUL

**Man as soul.** St. Augustine thought of man as a unity—a doctrine which Patristic philosophy had stressed even before his time. Man is not a new substance (*unio substantialis*) which results from the fusion of two substances, as will be maintained later in the Middle

Ages in dependence on Aristotelian terminology. His unity consists in this, that the soul possesses, uses, and governs the body. "The soul is a certain kind of substance, sharing in reason, fitted to rule the body" (*De Quant. Anima*e, 13, 22; ed. Schopp, Vol. II, p. 131). Man is, as a consequence, truly soul; the body is not a constituent part of the composite nor equal to the soul in importance. "Thus man is a rational soul, which makes use of a mortal and material body" (*De Mor. Eccles. Catholicae*, 1, 27). If St. Augustine taught that the soul does not reside in a part of the body but is in the whole as a "vital tension" (*intensio vitalis*), he is obviously utilizing anew Stoic terminology (*τόνος*). More basic for the understanding of his attitude toward psychology is the universal Platonism of the Fathers. The pessimistic note which is still struck by Origen—the soul lives in the body as in a prison—was rejected by St. Augustine as it had been by others before him. The doctrine of man as essentially soul, as it was intensively cultivated in this period, continued to be defended and became through St. Augustine the common heritage of the Christian attitude toward man in general.

**The body in Christianity.** As Georg von Hertling has shown, this view persisted both in practice and in reality as the predominant one even after the adoption of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, when his language was used and the unity of body and soul was understood in the sense that we must recognize in the body a genuine constituent of man, as essential to him as the soul. Because this view of the body persisted in Christian thought, we can see why so much attention was given to developing an ethical doctrine of values and virtues and why little attention was paid to a corresponding doctrine on the values of the corporeal and material world. The situation is far otherwise today, when sociologists see in historical materialism a necessary adjunct to education and so great stress is laid in modern physical culture on the value of sports and sex in the development of the individual's life. But we can ask whether this modern trend reflects the true spirit of Aristotle. Especially after the investigations of Jaeger with regard to Aristotle's teaching on body-soul relationships, we can justly inquire whether the so-called antithesis between Plato and Aristotle on this matter is really quite as antithetical as usually represented.

## 2. SUBSTANTIALITY

Because of the position which St. Augustine adopted toward the

soul, it became necessary for him to show that it is actually a substance. We have already seen that in this respect Christian philosophy assumed an attitude that was different from that view that had been defended by the Greeks (p. 307). Through St. Augustine this interpretation of its substantiality will become decisive for and regulative of the future. He corroborated it by an analysis of the self-consciousness, which manifests itself in three ways: the reality of the ego, its independence, and its duration.

**Reality of the ego.** The consciousness of the ego does not denote anything artificial, something of the imagination, but signifies reality, a reality which is the immediate consciousness of a fact, somewhat after the fashion of the truth contained in his statement: *si enim fallor, sum.*

**The autonomy of the ego.** The autonomy of the ego results from comparing it with its actions. The ego is something more than its acts. These belong to it, but it is not these acts nor even their summation. In relation to them it plays the role of a guiding principle which operates in them: "These three, namely, memory, intellectual power, and love belong to me, and to themselves; they do what they do, not for themselves, but for me; rather I become active through them. . . . In short, it is I who remember through the memory; it is I who reason through the intellect; it is I who love through love. I am, of course, not memory; I am not understanding; I am not love, but I possess them" (*De Trin.*, XV, 22).

**Duration.** Precisely this ego, distinct from its acts, remains in these acts ever one and the same. In the chapters on memory (*Conf.*, X, 8 ff.) in which Augustine describes with psychological delicacy the variety of the stream of consciousness, he stresses the persistence of the ego throughout every change of conscious content and of conscious states. By so doing he made secure the substantiality of the soul, for we term substance that which is an autonomous, persisting and real being.

### 3. IMMATERIALITY

The phenomenological art both in the consideration and the presentation of his psychological researches helped St. Augustine to arrive at a knowledge of the immateriality of the soul. All our psychological acts are without spatial extension. Now, everything corporeal has height, breadth, and thickness. He concludes that the soul must, therefore, be immaterial.

#### 4. IMMORTALITY

**Eternal truth.** It is precisely such a soul which must be immortal. The chief points in the discussion of the soul's immortality may be found in Book II of the *Soliloquies* and in the smaller work, *De immortalitate animae*. The basic thought contained in his proof for the immortality of the soul is the following: Since truth is unchangeable and eternal, and since the human mind is united inseparably to it, the human mind must also be eternal. The core of the proof is the inseparable union of the mind with truth. The foundation for this consideration is neither that the soul is the bearer of truth nor that it permits truth to be found in it. Such assertions prove nothing, because we may also discover error in the soul. Error, however, is not an ultimate; it can be rejected. Single truths may also be lost. But above all these vagaries in searching for the truth, there stands the power to detect truth, the law of truth in general. This remains as something that is found naturally wherever we talk of the mind. In it both eternity and the absolute proclaim their presence. The soul, connected with time by reason of its acts, passes over, by reason of its contents, into the eternal world — into the world of truth.

**The living soul.** And it is the living soul to which this is essentially ascribed — not only to a transcendental consciousness. St. Augustine did not hold obstinately to an abstraction in order to uncover in it an eternal validity. He realized that it must be the living ego which must so remember, think, will, and love in order that the inseparable union with truth and with values might generally become known. This inseparable union therefore reaches into the substance of the living ego, and consequently the soul is immortal.

#### 5. ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

St. Augustine experienced difficulty when he explored the problem of the soul's origin. In his own mind he was convinced that the soul could not emanate from God in the sense in which Neo-Platonic pantheism explained it, because the soul would then necessarily be a part of God Himself. He emended Origen, whose doctrine of pre-existence had not sufficiently adapted ancient Platonism to Christian speculation. For St. Augustine the soul must be created. On this point various possibilities were left open for investigation. Either souls proceed from the soul of Adam (generationism), or each soul is individually created (creationism), or the souls existed in God and

are dispatched into bodies, or they existed in God and of their own accord freely entered into bodies of their own choice (a notion of pre-existence held by some early Christian thinkers). Creationism occasioned a special difficulty for St. Augustine's theology, because by it the doctrine of original sin could not be explained sufficiently well. Generationism appeared to him to be much more suitable, but it ran the danger of lapsing into materialism. Even the mature St. Augustine admitted that he had not arrived at personal clarity on this point (*Retr.*, I, 1, 3). The difficulty may be found in Plato, to whom, on the one hand, the soul was of the body—it was the principle of sensory life—and on the other hand, it was radically different from it (cf. p. 103 f.). The trouble appears later also in Aristotle and in the Peripatetic School (cf. pp. 186 and 263) and is enhanced by an increased emphasis being placed on the substantiality of the soul in Christian speculation.

## THE GOOD

### 1. THE PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

Eternal law. The *rationes aeternae* in the mind of God are, for St. Augustine, the foundations of both knowledge and being. They are, as we will now see, also the basis for morality. In this connection they are called by preference "the eternal law." In itself, however, the concept "eternal law" is much broader. Eternal law is the world-plan or the will of God which enjoins that the natural law be observed and forbids that it be transgressed: "The eternal law is the divine reason or the will of God commanding that the natural order be maintained and forbidding it to be disturbed" (*Lex aeterna est ratio divina vel voluntas Dei ordinem naturalem conservari iubens et perturbari vetans*) (*Contra Faust.*, 22, 27). Or, as it stands in the *De Libero Arbitrio*, I, 6, 15: "The concept of eternal law, which is impressed upon us, denotes in short that justness through which everything is ordered in the best way possible." The eternal law, therefore, includes the whole ontological order. In this concept being must be understood in its widest sense, so that under it as parts we may incorporate the being of nature as the material world (*lex naturalis*), the ideal being of logical validity (*lex rationis*), and the being of obligatory moral precepts (*lex voluntatis; ordo amoris*). By preference St. Augustine designated the moral law as the eternal law. He

was able to do this by substituting the whole for the part; and when he did this, he simultaneously proposed the final and universal principle of moral value. To express this thought he used the expression "natural law" (*lex naturalis*), in which the word "nature" (*natura*), in harmony with its traditional meaning, denotes the whole of the ontological order. Thus St. Augustine writes: "On the basis of the eternal law, by which the natural law is preserved for us, we are able to live correctly (morally)" (*Contra Faust., loc. cit.*). This is Stoic terminology, as St. Augustine found it in Cicero. In the background we can, nonetheless, discern Aristotle and Plato, as well as the cosmic law of Heraclitus. In any case, the eternal law as the ideal universal order becomes the principle of morality for Augustine. Since this law coincides substantially with the essence of God, or more precisely with divine wisdom (*ut ratio*), Augustine can also say that God is the ultimate principle of moral good. Everything is good, but only through Him, just as everything is true solely through Him, and every being has its being only through His Being. He is the *bonum omnis boni* in the sense of Platonic *methexis* or participation.

**The will of God.** St. Augustine also complemented the ancient principle of morality which basically had been considered as an ordinance of reason. By so doing we can clearly recognize the influence of the Christian religion. In addition to the wisdom of God, the divine will is assumed also as a principle of morality. This will of God is laid down for us in the Decalogue. To understand this aright, we must be mindful that the will of God is not sheer caprice; actually it is synonymous with divine wisdom — *divina sapientia vel voluntas Dei* are the words used in the definition that had been advanced — and also the essence of God itself, which can neither change nor encompass a power that is foreign to, and oppressive of, us, since our own being traces its origin to it. This was something that Ockham and Kant overlooked and something that led them to misunderstand theonomic morality. The recognition of the will-factor in precepts of moral obligation is basic to the development of religious morality, and especially for the cultivation of a metaphysics of duty.

## 2. FREEDOM

Does genuine human freedom exist? Does it exist, even if by means of the ideas in the mind of God our life's course is "categorically determined" for us from all eternity? Augustine did not think that freedom was endangered in any way by this, because the eternal law

denotes a causal determination only in irrational nature. In the realm of spiritual beings, however, it forms only an ideal obligatory precept which conversely presupposes freedom, if freedom is to have any meaning at all.

### 3. THE MORAL ACTION

**Primacy of the will.** More fully than antiquity St. Augustine dealt with the importance of the will for the essence of concrete, moral actions and for life itself. No longer did he speak in the language of intellectualism, which had been used even by the Stoics, although they had appreciated the importance of the will. To him morality was the will or, as he liked to say, love. The will is the entire man. "The will is always present, for men are nothing more than will" (*De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 6 or as translated by E. Dent: "They are all direct wills"). So strongly did he appreciate that the soul of morality was to be found in love that he formulated its role as follows: *Dilige, et quod vis, fac* ("Love and do what you will"). Scholars are accustomed to speak of the primacy of the will in Augustine; not without reason, for art represents Augustine as a saint with a flaming heart.

**Logic of the heart.** But in regard to his doctrine we must remember that he was not thinking of individualistic caprice or of tyrannical will and especially not of any kind of pure emotionalism in human beings. The heart, according to St. Augustine, has its own law. Upon the human will the law of goodness is indelibly inscribed.

1) *Natural Good.* The heart gravitates toward the good as the body to a "place proper to it." St. Augustine drew upon an ancient concept when he described the human heart. "My love is my weight: wherever I go my love is what brings me there. By Your Gift we are on fire and borne upwards: we flame and we ascend" (*Conf.* XIII, 9; ed. Sheed, p. 327). Neither loving nor willing without further distinction is therefore decisive, but the hidden orientation, effective in loving, right loving, and right willing. "Love, but look to what love merits" (*Enarr. in Ps.* 31, 2, 5). "Everything seeks its proper place; the fire ascends upward, the stone downward, always carried along by its own inner weight," and "things out of their place are in motion; they come to their place and are at rest" (*Conf.*, *loc. cit.*; ed. Sheed, p. 327). We must in this fashion understand St. Augustine's famous dictum: "Thou hast created us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

2) *An apriority of value.* God is primal love upon which all things draw. We realize in Augustinian loving that we are dealing with an apriori declaration of value. "Just as our soul, before we obtained happiness, had borne a concept of that happiness upon it, so that we might be better able to know something about supreme happiness and we could say, in the spirit of faith and without doubt, that we desire to be forever happy—so also we possessed before we arrive at truth a knowledge of the wisdom in our soul by reason of which every one of us is able to answer the question, whether we wish to be wise or not, without any doubtful obscurity" (*De Lib. Arb.*, II, 9, 26). By such a view St. Augustine had anticipated a number of modern concepts. Pascal was able to develop from this beginning his theory on the logic of the heart; Brentano, his idea of "rightful love," and Scheler, his apriori value. In the background, however, we can detect Platonism with its *Eros*, from which the *Symposium* draws its conclusion and its inspiration that the *Eros* makes man restless until he finds his way from the foreign land, the *ἀλλότριον*, back to the good in itself as his own true home (*οἰκεῖον*) where man is both happy and peaceful. This idea persists in the Stoic philosophy in the *oikeiosis* or Stoic concept of true self-love, although in a purely naturalistic version. In connection with the Platonic *Eros* and the *oikeῖον* we can plainly perceive that Augustinian love is not meant to be irrational.

3) *Charity and wisdom.* Just as the *Symposium* is the parallel of the *Phaedo*, the *eros* the parallel of the *phronesis*, so Augustinian charity is the parallel of *sapientia* or wisdom. These are but paths to the same objective. The decisive element is man's supreme and final end, the good in itself and its objective order. This is manifest to us at one time rationally, at another time emotionally. Ancient man did not lend himself to such an extreme Either-Or. He could still recognize variety as different aspects of a uniform whole. And so for St. Augustine, it is neither love without cognitive elements nor reason without emotional references. "He who knows the truth knows that Light, and he who knows the Light, knows Eternity. Charity knows it. O eternal truth and true love and beloved eternity"—*O aeterna veritas et vera caritas et cara aeternitas* (*Conf.*, VII, 10; ed. Sheed, p. 145).

#### 4. ETERNAL HAPPINESS

**The fulfillment of love.** If we posit the soul of moral life as love,

we achieve a clarification of man's last end and its consummation. St. Augustine saw this fulfilled in eternal happiness, in the beatific vision. The entire teaching of antiquity concerning *eudaemonia*—the thoughts of a Plato, of an Aristotle, of the Stoics, of a Cicero, of a Philo, and of a Plotinus—was known to St. Augustine and he employed it effectively. But he again embarked upon an entirely new course, and this resulted from his consideration of morality as will and as love. If our life is one of love and yearning—*vita nostra dilectio est*—its perfection is a repose in and an enjoyment of happiness. Eternal bliss is not a thought of a thought, a thinking of a thinking, but the fulfillment of love in a union of the will with its final end.

**Uti — frui.** To express his thought on this subject, St. Augustine made use of the expression *frui* (enjoy). This means not only the primacy of love in contrast to the intellect, but also the absolute value of such a state. Just as Aristotle perceived in *eudaemonia* an absolute special value, so Augustine contrasted *frui* (to enjoy) with *uti* (to use) and recognized in the latter interdependent values brought together. These continuously point to something higher and of themselves cannot give us peace. To them we must add everything earthly. This earthiness may not be entirely dependent upon itself. Consequently, we can by this concept perceive the objective character of this "eudaemonism." Understood in this strict sense, there can be no eudaemonism. For goodness does not in any way depend on an inclination, but the inclination gravitates toward the good: *Inde beatus, unde bonus*. Only an inclination guided by the good can lead us to true happiness. Happiness sought after from a motive of subjective inclination brings in its wake more unhappiness than happiness, more desolation than consolation (*Epist.*, 130, 2), or to quote again from the *Confessions* (XIII, 9): *Minus ordinata inquietas sunt, ordinantur et quiescunt*. One has often grossly misinterpreted the Christian doctrine of eternal bliss, and the ethics which result from it as a morality of personal welfare. In reality it is as normative as the ethics of Kant. It avoids all rigorism, however, because it does not make absolute only certain features of morality but recognizes in them only references to a whole. St. Augustine, in whom persists the whole of ancient speculation on law and the ancient doctrine of goodness constructed on it; St. Augustine, to whom nothing human was foreign, bestowed upon it this balanced attitude as his contribution.

**Peace.** Through this view we can better understand the favorite

notion of St. Augustine, to which he returns ever and anon: the idea of peace. Peace is the great goal of the City of God and also the goal of the individual life. If man succeeds in conquering his unruly passions and in discovering the way to true life, that is, to the good, he will find fulfilled that which the Lord had promised: "Peace upon peace" (*Epist.*, 130, 2). Behind this ideal there is hidden no effete quietism, to ameliorate which we must exercise faustlike activity. The concept of peace, on the contrary, denotes the fulfillment of an objective, teleological ethics according to which all living and all striving hasten toward a final end which at one and the same time is both perfection and happiness, much after the fashion in which Goethe had conceived of it: And all struggling and all striving are eternal repose in God, the Lord of all.

### THE CITY OF GOD

St. Augustine made his ideas on the philosophy of value and of happiness particularly useful for concrete life by his philosophy of sociology and history, which he presented in his *City of God*.

#### 1. ORIGIN OF THE CITY

St. Augustine appreciated the naturalness of the state, had a remarkable understanding of the psychology of the masses, and took into account in his definition of people the "arbitrary" factors in all social development. "A people is a multitude of reasonable creatures conjoined in a general agreement of those things it respects" (*De Civ. Dei.*, XIX, 24; ed. Dent, Vol. II, p. 264). In this definition he showed himself opposed to all subjective caprice as well as to all tyrannical will. In it he bases his sociological and historical philosophy on the concept of order. A tyranny that jettisons justice cannot be distinguished in any way from the rule of a pack of thieves or of a band of robbers (*ibid.*, IV, 4). To St. Augustine, men and cities denote wills, but they must represent regulated wills.

#### 2. THE CITY OF GOD AND THE EARTHLY CITY

St. Augustine extended his concept to include the whole of universal history. Its social formation could be the City of God or the City of this world. This comparison is not fully synonymous with the Church and the civil state; rather it denotes social groups which are in accord with the will of God or opposed to it; com-

munities in which order prevails; or communities in which chaos, idealism, or base desires have gained mastery. The Church can stand on one side or the other, according to the condition in which she finds herself; and this is true also of the temporal city, the City of this world. The earthly City (*civitas terrena*) may therefore be built upon one or the other kind of human order. It may exhibit in its structure a grandiose organization, it may achieve supreme objectives. If its essence, however, is limited solely to the goods of this earth and it enjoys them (*frui*) instead of merely using them (*uti*) for a higher purpose beyond mere human passion, to a good that is found only in God, it is only of this earth. It is basically disorder—*cupiditas naturalis* is the expression which Thomas Hobbes will employ later to describe it—and its values are in reality illusory. The City of God, however, is made up of men who submit themselves to the eternal law of God. They do not deliver themselves up to material things so that they may enjoy either these or themselves. They realize in and from God an ideal order in which the world and men may find a way to live in peace and accord, in which both the world and men find the means of arriving at a sabbatical repose in God.

### 3. PURPOSE OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

The meaning that lies behind universal history is simply that these two Cities are constantly at odds. In an ingenious passage St. Augustine shows by means of anecdotes culled from the universal history of the Old Testament, Greek States, and the Roman Empire, how the powers of good must be in continuous conflict with the powers of evil. He brings to his task a clear-sighted critique which never permits him to be blinded by the external appearances of many works produced by the ancient culture. He understands well how to expose them as brilliant depravities. No matter how the various stages of the struggle between light and darkness may be shaped in the history of the world, the *societas terrena* or the *societas diaboli* will always be conquered and the *civitas Dei* will always triumph. "For good is imperishable and victory must always belong to God."

# CHAPTER 16

## FROM BOETHIUS TO THE END OF THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

### BOETHIUS

#### THE LAST ROMAN

Next to St. Augustine in importance for the Middle Ages looms the figure of Boethius.

#### LIFE AND WORKS

Manlius Serverinus Boethius, of the ancient Roman line of the Anicii, was born in A.D. 470. Under Theodoric he held many important civic posts, among them those of consul and Master of the Palace. For his part in a political intrigue, he was seized and thrown into prison. After a lengthy imprisonment in Pavia he was finally brutally executed by the King of the Ostrogoths in 525.

Boethius set himself the goal of translating into Latin the complete writings of both Plato and Aristotle. We have, however, only his versions of the *Categories* and of the *Perihermeneias*. (The translation of the *Analytics*, *Topics*, and the *Sophistical Refutations*, which exist in various editions, are spurious. Lately the contention that James of Venice was their author has been vigorously attacked.) He wrote commentaries to supplement his translations; he also authored similar works for the *Isagoge of Porphyry*, one for the latter's translation by Marius Victorinus, and one for his own translation. To this we may add a number of smaller logical treatises, especially one on the syllogism in general and another on the hypothetical syllogism in particular. In these works we can readily see how familiar he was with even the Stoic philosophers. He also wrote on music and arithmetic. His masterpiece, upon which he worked while in prison, is: *The Consolation of Philosophy* (*De*

*Consolatione Philosophiae*). This consists of five books and forms a very sound theodicy, in which he touched upon and discussed the problems of the world, God, happiness, providence, faith, free will, and especially the problem of evil and the justice of God.

### Editions:

J. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, Vols. 63–64.—G. Weinberger, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vol. 67.—H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand, *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, Latin and English, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1918).—L. Cooper, *A Concordance of Boethius: The Five Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).—Books IV and V of the *Consolation of Philosophy* are found in *The Wisdom of Catholicism*, edited by A. C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1950).

### Bibliography:

H. M. Barrett, *Boethius: Some Aspects of His Times and Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).—H. J. Brosch, *Der Seinsbegriff bei Boethius* (Innsbruck, 1931).—F. C. Copleston, *History of Philosophy* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1950), II, 101–104.—E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1954), 97–106, 603–605.—H. R. Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius* (New York, 1935).

## BOETHIUS AND THE MIDDLE AGES

Boethius left the Middle Ages a wealth both of original thought and of problems. He set for himself the task of making his age acquainted with the whole of Plato and Aristotle. Nor did the Stoics fare badly in his ambitious plans.

**Aristotelian elements.** It was Boethius who introduced the basic notions of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics into Scholasticism, as, for example, the terms *act* (ἐνέργεια), *potency* (δύναμις), *species* (εἶδος, ὁρέα), *principle* (ἀρχή), *universal* (καθόλον), *subject* (ὑποκείμενον), *contingent* (ἐνδεχόμενον), *accident* (συμβεβηκός). He is practically the only source of mediaeval Aristotelianism before the thirteenth century. Up to that century he was also the sole instructor in logic or dialectics.

**Platonic elements.** In addition, Boethius transmitted to posterity fundamental Platonic notions and axioms. Platonic in origin is his concept of God, his interpretation of eternal bliss, the notion of

participation, his precise grasp of universals. The second book of *The Consolation of Philosophy* contains a rendering of part of Plato's *Timaeus*.

**Stoic elements.** Through Boethius much Stoic material entered into Scholasticism, as, for example, the concepts of nature, of the natural law, of the order of causality, of the Stoic problem dealing with fate and providence, and especially the notion of reality which contributed substantially to bringing it about that philosophers in the succeeding age recognized reality primarily in the material sensible world. Although Aristotle in contradistinction to Plato had introduced a new notion of reality, scholars could still interpret his metaphysics in a Platonic sense, because Aristotle considered the universal and the form as *a priori* by nature. It was the naturalistic interpretation of Aristotle which was later advanced by the Peripatetics and the concept of reality proposed by the Stoics which permitted the Middle Ages to interpret Aristotle differently and make of him a representative of an "empirical" and the foe of an idealistic metaphysics (cf. p. 263). Since Boethius spoke the language of the Stoics, he also contributed his share to this interpretation. Aside from the fact that on the one hand he suggested in his writings Platonic viewpoints and on the other hand he was convinced that Plato and Aristotle were in basic agreement, Boethius interpolated this conviction into his translations and commentaries. In connection with the problem of knowledge and metaphysics, he oftentimes unwittingly, but nevertheless actually and effectively, made the influence of that other Aristotle's intentions felt by his readers. We have said "that other Aristotle" of whom we have come to know ever since Jaeger, that he was the first Greek who taught us to look at the world with the eyes of Plato. Boethius is therefore ambiguous in his meanings and capable of being interpreted in various senses. He is, however, one of the first authorities of Scholasticism. He also offers the system as many solutions and stimuli, as he sketched for its philosophy lines of development.

## 1. God

**Personal God.** One of the chief problems of theodicy that fascinated Boethius was the idea of God. Although in his writings on God he drew much material from the great heritage of the past, he made it clear that for him at least God is a personal being. His theism sets him apart as a distinctly Christian thinker, on this point basically

different from Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, whom he followed on many other issues. The continuity of the Augustinian heritage of thought becomes through this an accomplished historical fact. Boethius' tractate, *De Sancta Trinitate*, shows that he thought as a Christian theologian.

**God as Being.** If we should question him as a philosopher on the essence of God, we would receive as answer: God is Being itself (*ipsum esse*), or God is Form. "But the divine substance is form without matter and is therefore one, and is its own essence (*est id quod est* — 'that which it is'). But other things are not simply their own essences, for each thing has its being from the things of which it is composed, that is, from its parts" (*De Trin.*, c. 2; *P. L.*, LXIV, 1250; ed. Loeb, p. 11). This distinction had an enormous effect on the Middle Ages. We can understand it best if we keep before our eyes the further philosophical dictum concerning the essence, namely, that God is the Good.

**God as the Good.** God is the supreme Good, which simply contains all other good in itself; *omnium summum bonorum cunctaque intra se bona continens* (*De Cons. Phil.*, III, 2; ed. Loeb, pp. 228-229). Since in comparison to Him we cannot think of anything greater or better, it must naturally and logically follow that God is identical with the good: *Cum nihil Deo melius excogitari queat, id, quo melius nihil est, bonum esse, quis dubitet?* "For since nothing can be imagined better than God, who doubteth but that is good than which is nothing better?" (*ibid.*, III, 10; ed. Loeb, p. 269). This statement must not be understood in the Neo-Platonic sense, although the terminology would seem to be the same, for Boethius guarded himself expressly against emanationism (*ibid.*, III, 12). Here we are dealing with that Platonism which we have already met in St. Augustine and which we will find in the ontological argument of St. Anselm of Canterbury. Just as in Plato, the Good in itself is the prototype and the fullness of being so that from it everything may be deduced dialectically, so in Boethius everything is contained in God. Just as in Plato the idea is reality itself, so in Boethius reality is bound up with the idea of God. God, consequently, is Being. Everything else is not what it is; that is, everything else must be derived from and must be based on Him, and thus receive its being. God, the One, is This and That, i.e., He is not a totality of parts in conjunction; He is not This or That taken apart. He is the ultimate principle and He is Being itself, *the* Being. The thesis on God as the *ipsum*

*esse* can be understood only if it is examined in the light of Platonism. In it we can detect no unwarranted passage from the logical to the ontological order; for—and by it a Platonism becomes apparent—all imperfection subsists by reason of the perfect, “because the nature of things began not from that which is defective and not complete, but proceeding from the entire and absolute” so that “all that is said to be imperfect is so termed for the want it hath of perfection,” and “it is well known that all perfection connotes an *a priori* in contrast to the imperfect” (*ibid.*, III, 10; ed. Loeb, p. 267). We could not conceive of the imperfect if we did not take for granted perfection as its presupposition (*loc. cit.*). Since the imperfect is a reality, the perfect as the presupposition of the imperfect is also truly a reality; in fact, it is *the Reality* and thereby the imperfect becomes possible. Consequently we are not dealing here with a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*; that is, we are not involved in an illicit transference from one genus to another. The nerve center of this entire syllogistic proof, drawn as it is from the various stages of perfection, is to be found rather in the Platonic assumption that the idea of the imperfect presupposes the idea of the perfect.

## 2. THE UNIVERSAL

**A thing of thought.** We encounter this solution of the problem again in the matter of the universals. In his commentary on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, Boethius appropriated the interpretation proposed by Alexander of Aphrodisias: the universal—man, virtue, goodness—is in this form of universality not a reality but simply a subject of thought which is based on reality. The truly real and the *a priori* by nature is the individual object or thing. From this our reasoning abstracts the universal by emphasizing and stressing the features and notes which are everywhere and in everything identical, in the conviction that by so doing we are at grips with the essential.

**Natura incorporea.** This essential and this universal Boethius calls the form, the intelligible species (*species intelligibilis*, “intellectual likeness”), the immaterial nature (*natura incorporea*). He maintains, furthermore, that in these spiritual contents there are ideas which take on a concrete form in material things. This sounds as if the universal were an *a priori* by nature, for it does take on a concrete form. Chapter Four of the fifth book of the *Consolation* confirms this conjecture. There we find that the universal forms cannot be abstracted from particular things but that our mind recalls *a priori*

forms. Sense knowledge has for its special task the conjuring up and separating of these memories. In such a theory the universals again become *apriori* by nature, to use the language of Aristotle.

**A Boethius divided in twain?** Did Boethius adopt a double view? At one time he became the victim of the naturalistic, empirical interpretation of Aristotle advocated by Alexander and spoke his language as well as wrote it. In reality, however, he retained a true sense for the genuine Aristotle, who indeed in his polemics against Plato oftentimes appeared to favor the view of Alexander, but who on the most important points of his metaphysics was accustomed always to Platonize, as we now realize once more due to recent studies. So also did Boethius. By this procedure he had not only pointed out to the Middle Ages the way to the spiritual homeland of Aristotle, but also opened to those Ages the possibility of a synthesis between Aristotelian and Platonic-Augustinian philosophy. But to those intellectuals who were concerned more with words than with reality, he at the same time had suggested, especially in his commentaries on the *Isagoge*, the temptations of Alexander.

### 3. THE PARTICULAR

For him the particular is also real, which is so much grist for the mill of an empirical interpretation of Aristotle. We are able to see his evaluation of the particular in such sentences as: *Diversum est esse et id quod est* — *Omni composito aliud est esse, aliud ipsum est* — *Omne quod est, participat eo quod est esse* — *Ipsum esse nondum est, at vero quod est, accepta essendi forma est atque consistit* (*Quomodo Subst.*, c. 1131 b c; ed. Loeb, p. 40, etc.). Even though we see in this that Boethius did not consider the universal a real being, as had genuine Platonism, but paid tribute to the new concept of reality formulated by Aristotle, we nevertheless perceive in the distinction of what is concrete (*id quod est*) in contrast to what is the essence (*esse, forma*), that the idea of participation reappears and is fundamental for the concrete existing object, and as a consequence denotes more than the product of abstraction. In these statements there is in embryo the whole Middle Ages with its problems centering on the universal and the particular, essence and existence, idealism and realism, Augustinianism and Aristotelianism. Boethius is an Aristotelian. But when he espoused the Aristotelian metaphysics of form, he was able to do so only because he Platonized and saw in the universal an *apriori* by nature, precisely as Aristotle had done when

he explained first substance by means of second (cf. p. 167 f.), and as everyone else must do when he wishes to speculate on metaphysics according to Aristotle's example and to see in the form more than the product of sheer abstraction.

#### 4. PROVIDENCE, FATE, AND FREEDOM

We are confronted by this problem again in the sphere of human actions. The eternal forms determine everything that takes place in the world or "in nature," as Boethius was accustomed to say when he wished to avail himself of the terminology of the Stoics. The properties of things which are exhibited in their actions (*agere*) do not come from matter. It is, therefore, the form which determines natural place (*De Trin.*, c. 2; *P. L.*, XLIV, 1250). The earth derives, for example, its properties of dryness and heaviness from the form and not from matter. In the world the eternal plan which pervades even the most minute details and circumstances rules all being, namely, the providence of God. The forms are nothing more than the ideas which exist in the mind of God, of which St. Augustine had always spoken: "Providence is the very divine reason itself seated in the highest Prince, which disposeth all things" (*De. Cons. Phil.*, IV, 6; ed. Loeb, p. 334).

And must we not again ask ourselves the question, as we already had of St. Augustine: Does freedom exist for man? Boethius allocated a place for it by differentiating between two different classes of beings: the irrational world and the world of rational beings. In the first class everything that happens occurs necessarily through the categorical causal determination on the part of the form. This causal connection is limited only to the province of the space-time world and only this is called fate. To the Stoics, on the other hand, fate embraced absolutely everything. In contrast, in the world of reason and of mind, that is, in the world of men, the eternal forms are operative only as ideals which we should indeed follow but to which we can refuse our consent. In general, and in this a Neo-Platonism again asserts itself, the more the spirit, so much the more freedom. The freedom of the will becomes, then, a function and an exercise of reason, proximately of practical reason. The mind of man, in contrast to the instinct of the animal, is always faced with a multiplicity of possibilities because of its knowledge of universals. This mind can choose from among them, when reflecting on its choice it raises judgment. "Freedom consists not in the will, but in

the judgment over the will" (*P. L.*, XLIV, c 493 a). Whereas the Augustinian freedom of choice—the Latins called it *electio*—is a matter of the will, Boethius envisages freedom of the will—he calls it *liberum arbitrium*—as something intellectual. His viewpoint differs from that of Augustine. In this matter he was patently influenced by the Stoics and by Alexander of Aphrodisias.

## 5. TIME AND ETERNITY

If man is free, does not providence become illusory? Since a free action is beyond human calculation, it cannot be known beforehand. The question was answered by a consideration of the eternity of God (*De Consol. Phil.*, V, 6). God is related to time not as is mankind, teaches Boethius in imitation of St. Augustine. For us time is extended over a succession of moments of past, present, and future; we must proceed from times past to times to come. A created being cannot comprehend and embrace all the space of life together and at one time and must consequently traverse an endless road, time itself, as St. Augustine had believed. God, on the contrary, comprehends and possesses the whole fullness of an endless life together and at once; He possesses His whole being in one single, timeless, but simultaneous now. And in this eternity consists. "Eternity therefore is a perfect possession altogether of an endless life"—*Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio* (*De Consol. Phil.*, V, 6; ed. Loeb, p. 401).

The human moment of time with its littleness and its transitoriness is only an image and a shoddy imitation of that timelessness now present in God; and it guarantees to man who experiences it only that much, namely, that he appears to live. We must, therefore, distinguish radically between genuine eternity in the sense of timelessness (*aeternum*) and a spurious eternity in the sense of an endless flow of time (*perpetuum*). This latter mode of reckoning seems to be that which can be predicated of the world. For this reason there is no such thing as *prescience* in God, for everything that denotes the future for us is present to Him. Even when we quickly change our minds or alter our resolutions, as, for example, to enjoy our freedom to the full or to play a trick on divine providence, all this takes place in the sight of God in His ever present eternal now. And that which we plan has already happened insofar as it has already taken place in His intuitive, simultaneous knowledge. God, consequently, knows all our free actions with sure necessity, not

because they must take place with necessity but because that which actually and freely does happen can be known necessarily in its contingency at the very moment that it takes place, if it is only rightly apprehended.

## 6. EVIL

**The theory of Boethius.** The greatest problem with regard to divine providence is the fact of evil in the world. That there is such a thing as evil, that it may sometimes go unpunished, that inferiority oftentimes triumphs and virtue not only is passed over but its practitioners reduced to servitude by its transgressors, even though God is just, were questions asked by Boethius as he languished in prison. We can well appreciate how his own fate permitted him to pose such queries with perhaps more justification than is usually the case. His solution runs as follows: The power of evil is only illusory; the virtuous are always stronger. The happiness of the wicked is likewise only a spurious happiness; that of the virtuous, who may be compared to travelers who would travel on foot to those who seek to reach their destination by walking on their hands, is genuine. Providence remains unshakable. Every happening within the series of causes which govern the whole of nature is regulated by divine knowledge. "Whereof it ensueth that though all things seem confused and disordered to you, who are not able to consider this order, notwithstanding all things are disposed by their own proper measure directing them to good. For there is nothing which is done for the love of evil even by the wicked themselves" (*De Consol. Phil.*, IV, 6; ed. Loeb, p. 345).

It is only our own personal inability to recognize the interrelationships of events that causes us to doubt. In reality whatever takes place is adapted to the needs of the individual, no matter what it is that happens. Only the ignorant yearn for sweets when the physician knows that bitter must be prescribed as an antidote: "He whom thou thinketh most just and most observant of equity, seemeth otherwise in the eyes of Providence which knoweth all. . . . She mixeth for others sour and sweet according to the dispositions of their souls; she troubles some lest they should fall to dissolution by long prosperity, others are vexed with hardships, that they may confirm the forces of their mind with the use and exercise of patience. . . . For a certain order embraceth all things, so that even that which departeth from the order appointed to it, though it falleth into another, yet that

is order also, lest confused rashness should bear any sway in the kingdom of Providence" (*ibid.*; ed. Loeb, p. 351). Or more briefly: "It is only a divine strength to which even evil things are good, when by using them in due sort, it draweth some good effect out of them" (*ibid.*; ed. Loeb, p. 351).

**Its presuppositions.** This entire explanation is a variation on the theme that Augustine had already sounded, when in his *Commentary on the Psalms* (54, 1), he wrote that evil is present in the world for the purpose of punishing, of converting the wicked from their ways, or of testing the good—and here Boethius applies the moral to himself (*ibid.*, IV, 7). Behind this we can detect Stoic and Neo-Platonic reasoning on our theme, together with the conviction that only virtue can make us happy and only the good has being, whereas evil represents a deficiency, a non-being, a privation (*privatio*). Only on the basis of the assumption of the notions of happiness, of value, and of being does this whole consideration have any meaning and make sense; it loses it as soon as this idealistic wholeness of concept is disregarded. Boethius becomes again the representative of a great philosophical tradition. We see here how he binds together the various and numerous discussions on theodicy beginning with Plato and continuing to Leibniz.

## 7. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Neither evil nor fate are consequently able to weaken the idea of the good. God is good and men can become good. In pursuing goodness we can find the purpose of our lives. In the face of such a task we must give an accounting of ourselves, each according to his individual responsibility and autonomy. For, in spite of the great value he placed on the universal in cosmic events, Boethius did not fail to realize the place or the importance of the individual in reality, as we have already seen. Not without reason, then, does the renowned definition of a human person trace its origin to him: *Persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia* (*De Persona et Duabus Naturis*, c. 3; the other name of this tractate is *Contra Eutychen*, C. III; ed. Loeb, p. 85: "Person is 'the individual substance of a rational nature'"). Endowed with freedom and charged with responsibility, the person stands before God and the good. In the face of death this was the final word that the philosopher had to say to his fellow men, even though experience taught him that they could become veritable beasts if they rejected their responsibility (*De*

*Consol. Phil.*, IV, 3). With stanch assurance and with classical as well as edifying clarity he phrased the following sentences: "All of which being so, the free will of mortal men remaineth unviolated, neither are the laws unjust which propose punishments and rewards to our wills, which are free from all necessity. There remaineth also a beholder of all things which is God, who foreseeth all things, and the eternity of His wisdom, which is always present, concurreth with the future quality of our actions, distributing rewards to the good and punishments to the evil. Neither do we in vain put our hope in God or prayer to Him; for if we do this well and as we ought, we shall not lose our labor or be without effect. Wherefore fly vices, embrace virtues, possess your minds with worthy hopes, offer up humble prayers to your Highest Prince. There is, if you will not dissemble, a great necessity of doing well imposed upon you, since you live in the sight of your Judge, who beholdeh all things" (*De Consol. Phil.*, V, 6; ed. Loeb, p. 411).

## DIONYSIUS THE PSEUDO-AREOPAGITE

(c. A.D. 500)

### THE PSEUDO-AREOPAGITE AND THE SUCCEEDING PERIOD

Among the great authorities of the Middle Ages we number a whole series of writings which were falsely ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, who is mentioned in Acts 17:34. They are *περὶ τῆς οὐρανίας ἱεραρχίας* (*De Caelesti Hierarchia*, "On the Celestial Hierarchy"); *περὶ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱεραρχίας* (*De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, "On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy"); *περὶ θείων ὄνομάτων* (*De Divinis Nominibus*, "On the Divine Names"); *περὶ μυστικῆς θεολογίας* (*De Mystica Theologia*, "On Mystical Theology"), and ten other letters. In reality they borrow from Proclus and belong to the beginning of the sixth century. Since they were often translated and frequently the subject of commentaries—translated by the Abbot Hilduin of St. Denis (c. 830), John Scotus Eriugena (c. 860), John the Saracen (c. 1167), Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln (thirteenth century) and Ambrose Traversari (fifteenth century); commented upon by Eriugena, Hugh of St. Victor, John the Saracen, Thomas Gallus, Robert Grosseteste, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Peter Olivi, Francis of Mayronis, Dionysius the Carthusian—they became a fertile source of Neo-Platonic ideas, especially for the mystical writers. In Nicholas of Cusa we still glimpse the Pseudo-Areopagite.

## 1. PATHS TO GOD

The central thought running through the Pseudo-Areopagite is the idea of God. God is, as He was in Neo-Platonism, the Super-Essential, the Super-Goodness, the Super-Perfect, the Super-One. There are some positive assertions which we can make of God, and this positive theology opens up for us the first path to God. Since God is the Super-Essential, this positive theology must always submit itself to a higher negative theology for proper correction. This negative theology touches upon all that is sheer creature, so that everything that lies beyond it may obtain proper recognition. We can point out still another way, the third path, if we close our eyes and sink back into silence and into darkness and into a preternatural light, without phantasm, without sound, without notion. Here we become one with God in mystical immersion and ecstasy.

These are exclusively thoughts that were already known and had been drawn from Neo-Platonism, with this difference—their mood is much more exalted, their terminology more schematized and typified. These stereotyped thoughts are broached “in a thousand different ways” as the *Divine Names* (XI, 6) declares. If we should keep before our eyes the themes of which the *Divine Names* treats, namely, the good, light, the beautiful, eros, ecstasy, being, life, wisdom, the spirit, truth, power, justice, the big and the small, the same and the different, similarity and dissimilarity, repose and motion, identity, eternity and time, peace, the perfect and the one, and the discussions on notions as these are applied to God, we would quickly realize that in this work a great tradition continues on and problems are presented, concerning which Plato and Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, V), Plotinus and St. Augustine had busied themselves.

## 2. THE FOUNDATION OF BEING

**The world in God.** Because He is the Super-Good, God bestows on us our whole being, and He gives it of Himself. In Him all principles are contained: being, all beings, qualities. Everything is uniform in Him as One in one. Just as all numbers are embraced in one, and just as all possible circumferences are in the center of the circle, and just as all straight lines are contained in a point, so a more acute and a more sublime examination can discover everything in the Cause of all things. It is not true that God can only be this and not that. As the source of all things He, anticipating Himself, con-

tains all beginnings and all limitations at one and the same time, just as the sun with its one light embraces within itself all that is revealed as variety and through which this variety can alone exist ("He is all things as the cause of all, sustaining within Himself and proferring [to all] the beginnings and limitations of all"—πάντα ἐστὶ ως πάντων αἴτιος, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πάσας ἀρχάς, πάντα συμπεράσματα, πάντων τῶν ὄντων συνέχων καὶ προέχων, *De Div. Nom.*, I, 8).

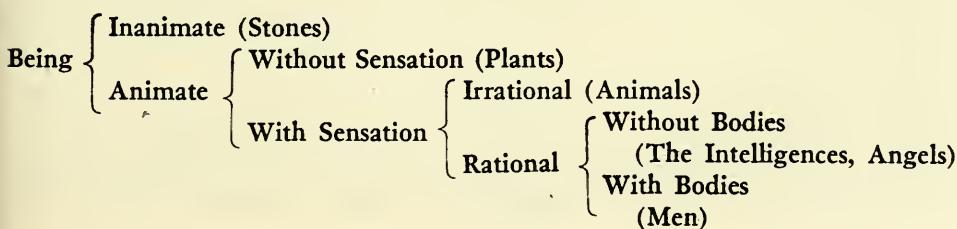
Just as all light and all life partake of the sun, so all being and all life, all values and all beauty participate in God. This "being contained" is that "being contained" in the divine exemplars in the mind of God, for in the Supreme Cause "pre-exist as a result of a supernatural unity the prototypal likenesses of all beings." The Pseudo-Dionysius offers us a precise definition of this archetype; it is of a kind that is typical of the entire work: "We call by the name *exemplars* [*paradeigmata*] all those pre-existing *logoi* or reasons of things, united in God and formative of their essences, which theologians call preconceptions, as, for example, the divine and benign manifestations of His will; they determine a being and create it; through them the Super-essential being has predetermined all beings and brought them into existence" (*ibid.*).

**The procession of the world from God.** God wills all things to proceed from Himself and by so doing gives existence to the world. "It is, of course, proper to the cause of all, as the Supreme Good, to call all things to share in itself, insofar as they are capable of doing so. For this reason all things share in divine providence, which flows from the supernatural cause. Beings would, of course, not exist if they did not participate in the essence and the source of all things" (*De Cael. Hier.*, IV, 1). In this procession we are dealing with an emanation: "He [the First Cause] leads forth essences according to an emanation from [His own] essence"—οὐσίας παράγει κατὰ τὴν ἀπὸ οὐσίας ἐκβασιν (*De Div. Nom.*, V, 8). But this notion should not be understood in a pantheistic sense. To avoid such a danger, Dionysius stressed the fact that things, even if they were eternal in the sense of the summation of all time, would not be eternal in the same sense as God is eternal, because He is before and above all infinite time (*ibid.*, IX, 6). In addition we are constantly being reassured that God is super-essential, super-goodness, super-being (or that which is beyond being). As is stated in the conclusion of *De Divinis Nominibus* in a short summary of the whole work, God remains ἐπέκεινα, "utterly beyond" in spite of this essential emanation.

tion. If we should, however, consider that this emanation is essential and so takes place necessarily, as necessarily, for instance, as the rays of light stream from the sun, it would be difficult to see how we could avoid pantheism. The fact that Dionysius was no pantheist is based on his intention not to be one. Above all else he was a Christian, and his Neo-Platonic thought-mediums were not employed in accordance with their actual intrinsic meaning but were pressed into the service of a Christian outlook and, after all has been said, received from it a totally different meaning, as is thoroughly evident in the individual quotations.

**Hierarchy of various classes of being.** The procession of things from God is completed in a series of steps, and through them we arrive at a hierarchical ordering of being, at an ontology of classes. Things or entities participate in God in a variety of ways. The closer a being stands to God, the more fully it shares in Him and so much the greater is its inner unity. The further a thing is removed from God, so much the more meager is its participation and so much the more is it disintegrated into variety—an illustration of this are the concentric circles which fan out from the center of the circle (*De Div. Nom.*, V, 6). "All inanimate creation shares in God simply by the fact that it exists. . . . Animate creatures, however, participate also in His superanimate and life-creating power. Everything that possesses mind and soul in addition, partakes of His complete superperfect "Wisdom" (*De Cael. Hier.*, IV, 1). Naturally, participation in God becomes more profound in immaterial spiritual beings, in the pure intelligences in the realm of the angels. These beings are also hierarchical and are divided into nine choirs.

**Scholasticism of the Pseudo-Areopagite.** 1) *The ontology of classes.* The idea of classification is not entirely novel. But as formulated by Dionysius in the very title of his works and as further developed in the commentary of Maximus the Confessor, this notion becomes fundamental to Scholastic ontology. The schematic division of being, which Maximus the Confessor proposes for *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, IV, 1, is as follows:



2) *Theory of participation, the good, and the notion of causality.*

The same is true of Dionysius' thoughts on participation, of his axiom that the Good wills to unfold itself—Pachymeres, in his paraphrase of Chapter One of the fourth book of *De Divinis Nominibus*, attributes this axiom to Gregory the Theologian—and above all of his concept of causality, whereby the eidetical or formal element predominated over the mechanical-dynamic in the matter of efficient causality. Dionysius formally identified the efficient cause with the exemplary: "In every cause there is an element of a striving for the beautiful and the good". (*De Div. Nom.*, IV, 7). And again: "Every rest and every motion is from the beautiful and the good, is in it, is toward it, is on its behalf. . . . Also every potency ( $\deltaύναμις$ ) and every act ( $\epsilonνέργεια$ ) . . . every contact ( $\epsilonπαφή$ ) . . . whatever is and whatever will be, is and will be on account of it [the good and the beautiful] and is always referable to it. By it is set in motion and held together and maintained in existence every exemplary, final, efficient, formal, and material cause" (*ibid.*, 10). Not only can God as the first efficient cause become the ultimate final cause, not only does He naturally move the world by means of love—since every motion is explained as a striving after Him—but also in all particular causes the effect He causes is in every instance a molding. The Scholastic efficient cause may not, therefore, be confused with the modern mechanical cause, which is subject to chance. For this reason Darwin was forced to search for new laws which would enable him to explain the development of species. The Scholastic efficient cause is always determined by the form. Aristotle had already proposed a similar doctrine. To form a correct estimate of the situation we must recognize how Platonism struck the keynote in this matter. It was truly Platonism which permitted Aristotle to reduce the cause of motion, which he had introduced primarily against Plato, to the formal cause. Through the Pseudo-Dionysius and his undeniable influence on Scholastic philosophy, the Platonizing interpretation of causality was pushed into the foreground by a thousand turns of expression. It happened as if by a happy accident, however, that in the Aristotelian notion of causality, the Platonic heritage never was lost. Yet on the basis of its unhistorical position, Scholasticism was not able to appreciate the true connection which existed between Aristotelian and Platonic reasoning, but was rather induced to understand and to develop the antithesis which existed in such a distinct manner in external tradition as one that

could never be reconciled. In the light of such a theory was coined the oft-repeated phrase that the cause is more sublime and contains more being than the effect (*De Div. Nom.*, IX, 6; II, 8). Descartes will still make use of it. This proposition has meaning only if understood in relation to the thought of Plato and joined to the notions of participation and emanation. This is especially apparent in Plotinus (*Enn.*, III, 3, 3, 32).

**Return of the world to God.** Faithful to his mentor Proclus, the Pseudo-Dionysius taught that the world would return again to God. This view was manifest in the meaning he attached to the notion of participation. Everything yearns for the form and consequently for the form of forms—to express Platonic thoughts in Aristotelian concepts. If all motion is a yearning for the good and the beautiful, the entire cosmic process must be a continuous movement toward God. The way is threefold: purification, illumination, and perfection. These well-known concepts, drawn primarily from asceticism and mysticism, are in this connection ontological factors which progress in a recessive evolution of being from below upward. In the human soul this return is effectually aided by faith and meditative prayer until it reaches its culmination in ecstatic union with the One.

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### THE END OF THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

At the end of the Patristic period we find a group of men who are more or less important for Scholasticism. For instance, there is

the faithful pupil of Augustine, Prosper of Aquitaine (d. c. 463), who collected some 392 "Sentences" of his teachers and by so doing laid the foundation for the literary classification known as *Books of Sentences*. Then we must mention the pupil of Boethius, Cassiodorus the Senator (d. 562). In addition to his famous historical and exegetical works he wrote a compendium of the seven liberal arts which was widely used in the Middle Ages. Under this title were taught extratheological sciences: the *trivium* (grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Cassiodorus made accessible to the Middle Ages also the accomplishments of Boethius in logic, arithmetic, astronomy, and music and for centuries his contributions sketched the path of all development. The Pseudo-Dionysius was fortunate enough to have possessed as a faithful interpreter Maximus the Confessor (d. 662). Through his commentaries on the pseudo-areopagitical writings he became a pioneer of Neo-Platonic movements. An important mine of information for the Middle Ages was the prolific literary output of Isidore of Seville (d. 636). From him stems a *Book of Sentences* which drew upon both Augustine and Gregory the Great. Still more influential were his *Etymologies*—a kind of encyclopedia which transmitted to posterity the knowledge available from antiquity and the Patristic period. For the Anglo-Saxon world Bede the Venerable (d. 735) was of special importance. He promoted study of the natural sciences. In conclusion we must mention John Damascene (d. 749). Although he rightly belongs to the Greek Patristic period, he was nevertheless adopted by the Latins as had been the Areopagite before him, after Burgundio of Pisa had translated into Latin in the twelfth century the third part of his principal work, *Source of Knowledge* ( $\pi\eta\gamma\eta\ \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ ) under the title *De Fide Orthodoxa*. Many Neo-Platonic ideas are contained in his works as well as many Aristotelian ideas; the latter are drawn, however, from the Syrian tradition of Aristotle. As in a recapitulation, we find united in him the chief intellectual movements which imparted to the Patristic period its special features: the Christian treasury of the Bible and the Fathers, Platonism and Neo-Platonism, Aristotelian philosophy. The latter, however, for a time receded into the background. But from this period on it moves more and more to the fore, so that in the golden age of Scholasticism it will dominate the entire scene.

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## SECTION 2. THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCHOLASTICISM

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### INTRODUCTION: SCHOLASTICISM IN GENERAL

#### 1. THE CONCEPT OF SCHOLASTICISM

Under Scholasticism defined in the strict sense we understand that philosophico-theological speculation which was forged in the schools of the Middle Ages beginning with Charlemagne and continuing up to the Renaissance, and with which we come into contact especially in the literary forms known as the *Summae* and the *Questions*. The schools in which it originated were originally cathedral or monastic institutions, later on universities. In a somewhat broader sense, Scholasticism signifies the speculation that burgeoned in this period but did not utilize the rationalistic conceptional method — a speculation which is modeled, nevertheless, upon the same metaphysical and religious pattern, as, for example, mysticism. By this term we may also understand the Arabo-Jewish philosophy, insofar as this hybrid was brought into contact with the true Scholasticism of the period.

#### 2. THE SCHOLASTIC METHOD

**Method of instruction.** The method of instruction employed in the schools of the Middle Ages was based on two fundamental forms: the *lectio* and the *disputatio*. In the former, our modern lecture, the teacher alone was permitted to speak. In form, this type of instruction followed the order presented in the various books of *Sentences* and was designed for the purpose of commenting on the “opinions” (*sententiae*) which had been advanced by recognized authors. In theology the basic text was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard; in philosophy, the works of Boethius or Aristotle. The *disputatio* was a free discussion carried on between teacher and students in which the arguments for and against (pro and con) were proposed and thoroughly examined.

**Literary forms.** 1) *Commentaries.* Out of these types of instructional methods there arose corresponding scholastic literary forms. From the *lectio* there grew the *Commentaries*, of which the Middle

Ages possessed legions, e.g., the *Commentaries* on Lombard, Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, and especially Aristotle.

2) *Summas*. From the *Commentaries* there developed the *Summas*. In these the authors gradually emancipated themselves from the strictures of the standard textbooks and followed the systematic-realistic viewpoint in the presentation of subject matter.

3) *Questions*. From the *disputatio* there resulted the literary genre known as the *Questions*. This category was again divided into two species: the *Quaestiones Disputatae* and the *Quodlibetalia*. The former contained the results of the *disputatio ordinaria* which was held regularly about every two weeks or so; these disputationes pursued a single theme for longer periods of time (e.g., the *De Veritate*, *De Potentia*, *De Malo* of St. Thomas). The latter, i.e., the *Quodlibetalia*, reported the outcome of the exercises in disputation which took place twice yearly, before Christmas and before Easter. These biennial exercises dealt now with one and now with another subject (*Quaestiones de quolibet*); they served as reviews or as re-presentations of special topics.

4) *The technique of the Summas*. The technique of the disputation, namely the *Pro* and the *Contra*, and the answers to the difficulties which were advanced after the disputation itself determined broadly the external structure of the mediaeval *Summas*. Thus, for example, in his *Summa Theologiae* Thomas Aquinas offers first several arguments which seemingly run counter to the solution that he proposes to offer (*objectiones*). By the phrase, *sed contra*, in which a text is generally quoted from a recognized authority, he introduces and propounds the contrary opinion. This opinion is then developed in the body of the article that follows (*corpus articuli*). From this is drawn the refutation of those arguments which were presented at the beginning as being in opposition to the solution proposed.

5) *Opuscula*. Scholasticism was not unacquainted with the free thematic treatment of a problem. The smaller, individual works which dealt with them were called *opuscula*.

### 3. THE SPIRIT OF SCHOLASTICISM

**Auctoritas et ratio (authority and reason).** According to the foregoing, the spirit of Scholasticism was signified by two basic elements: *auctoritas* and *ratio*, tradition and the speculation which pervaded it. *Auctoritas* is one mainspring of the Scholastic method. In theology such authorities were the texts of the Bible, of

the Fathers of the Church, of the Councils; in philosophy, the authorities were, above all others, the texts of Aristotle, who in this period was considered to be simply "The Philosopher," and then Averroës, who was simply "The Commentator." The opinions of such authorities were gathered together in the various *Books of Sentences*, and so we can appreciate the importance of such works in this period. Since such *Sentences* of recognized authors were not always in harmony, e.g., Augustine sometimes expressed himself at variance with Aristotle, we can perceive in this disagreement the second great driving force of the Scholastic method, namely, rational speculation, which sought to determine the meaning to be attached to traditional teachings by analyzing their concepts, by defining their actual validity more precisely, and, whenever possible, by showing their concordance.

**The weakness and the strength of the Scholastic method.** The speculative energy which was enfolded in this task was simply enormous. Two things stand out clearly: objectivity and logical acuteness. The Scholastic thinker did not reproduce his own subjective states. To him philosophy was not fiction, not sentiment, not a matter of viewpoint. He dedicated himself to the task of pursuing objective truth. These men were able to believe solely on the basis of the person who voiced the truth (in the theological sense, God) and to do things for the sake of the thing itself. And they adopted this course by a use of logic that only now is being accorded its just due. For a long time certain scholars purported to see in their reasoning only dialectics in the worst meaning of the term. Such criticism, moreover, is not entirely unjustified. The recognized masters of those days adhered oftentimes to literal meanings of terms. They believed in the traditional *termini* and expressed a preference for them. In order not to be forced to jettison them, the mediaeval scholars frequently gave them a meaning which could not be accorded them either historically or realistically. These thinkers were, in addition, too credulous, too unhistorical, too uncritical. As a result the various speculative movements of those ages overlapped and intermingled both in concepts and in problems, with the result that the thought of the Middle Ages is composed of various layers, much after the fashion in which old masters are painted over. To arrive at a genuine meaning of the terms employed, the services of skilled and painstaking *preparators* are required. Sometimes it becomes impossible to peel off the various layers of accretions which cover the earlier and truer meanings. But the layers, the accretions, are there, and this

again is an advantage which accrues to those who foster reverence for the traditional. Scholasticism has therefore become a great museum of the spirit. At a time when the manuscripts of antiquity were being carefully preserved, Scholasticism in its speculation took pains to lose nothing of what the great figures of philosophical history had produced. If Scholasticism frequently misinterpreted its own authorities, it has nevertheless transmitted to posterity the opinions of antiquity, and has placed no obstacles in the way of understanding again the well-preserved words in their original historical meaning. Scholasticism is one of the most rewarding fields for the history of ideas; concealed in it are many treasures still to be uncovered.

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# CHAPTER 17

## EARLY SCHOLASTICISM

### I. ORIGINS

#### 1. CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

The first beginnings of Scholasticism may be found in the accomplishments of Charlemagne. With him begins not only a new political but also a new intellectual life. With justice we can speak of a Carolingian renaissance. In those schools which were founded in his kingdom, a great and magnificent group of pioneering scholars plied their speculative arts. The Anglo-Saxon monk, Alcuin, left York in 781 to take up his teaching activity at Cologne. At the monastic school of Fulda, Rhabanus Maurus (d. 856) taught a group of students. Paschasius Radbertus (d. 860) and Ratramnus made famous the monastery of Corbie on the Somme river. True, in this period we cannot discover any outstanding philosophical accomplishments, but we can discern that a new springtime hovers in the air and we may expect that it will bring forth abundant fruit.

#### 2. ERIUGENA

We realize this immediately in encountering John Scotus Eriugena (d. 877) of Ireland (Ireland—*Scotia maior*; Eriugena is therefore a pleonasm). At the instigation of Charles the Bald, he translated into Latin the works of the Pseudo-Areopagite, which had been sent from Constantinople to the court of Louis the Pious. This translation provided for Neo-Platonism an opening into Scholasticism. His chief work bears the title *De divisione naturae* (*On the Division of Nature*). In this he treats of God as the Supreme Cause of ideas, of created things, and the return of all things to God.

**His Neo-Platonism.** 1) *Classes of beings.* In these themes we can detect the Neo-Platonic views that he espoused—and actually the philosophy of Eriugena is Neo-Platonic. Being is presumed to be

capable of being divided into various classes, and in his classification we have his hierarchy of values. At the apex stands God as the uncreated, all-creating First Cause (*natura creans increata*). By contemplating Himself, God gives rise to ideas from all eternity in sheer timelessness. In them God exhibits Himself and thereby produces the principles of becoming, for these ideas are the true causes of the being of things, the *causae primordiales* or *prototypae*. And these form the second class of beings: the created creative being (*natura creata creans*). When, then, the third class of beings, the space-time world, is created, it is these ideas which bestow upon it its being. By virtue of it all activity, all efficient causes, exist; for the beings of the third class cannot of themselves be creative (*natura creata nec creans*). For this reason, God is all in all and the world is a pure manifestation of Him. "We may not conceive of two different things, of things differing from one another, when we meditate upon the creator and the creature, but only of one and the same." The material sensible world does not portray the ideas in their purest form; it seeks, however, to do this. In the tendency of his concept of being we can discover a reason to assume a final step upon which the approximation to the pure and the supernatural is successfully achieved and "the completion" is reached, where being has again returned to its true principle (*natura nec creata nec creans*). In such a conception this metaphysics of being appears to become an "identity philosophy" in the style of Proclus.

2) *Alleged pantheism of Eriugena.* In certain quarters it has been argued that Eriugena developed a system of pantheism; and, as a matter of fact, as early as 1225 Pope Honorius III actually condemned his work on this particular count, when Amalric of Benes sought to bolster his own pantheism by that of Scotus Eriugena. We may not, however, overlook the fact that true pantheism, especially the modern variety — and it is from this starting point that we form our concept — seeks to do away with God. The work of Eriugena, on the contrary, sought the exact opposite: it attempted to lead us to a knowledge of the omnipotence of God. Eriugena said nothing more than had Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor, by whom he was strongly influenced. He did not, perhaps, stress strongly enough the difference between God and the world. But basically this distinction is present, because for Eriugena as well as for the Pseudo-Areopagite the ideas in the mind of God are not as eternal as God Himself, and this because they are created

and because the material, sensible world is as little identical to the idea as it was in genuine Platonism; it is only similar. And thus it will be also in mediaeval Neo-Platonism, whenever it offers interpretations of identity. These interpretations are less logical identities than religious symbols for the basic attitude of dependence; for in the days of infant Christianity, even more strikingly than in its own ancient beginnings, Neo-Platonism was as much a religious as it was a philosophical phenomenon. Neo-Platonism was accustomed to link itself regularly with mysticism, and its terminology is fraught with religious sentiments and tendencies.

**Faith and reason.** Through the spirit of Neo-Platonism we are able to understand the thesis developed by Eriugena, namely, that philosophy and religion are identical: true philosophy is religion, and vice versa. In this sense logical insight is the goal of faith. This does not mean that reason has precedence over faith nor does it denote a kind of rationalism. It does, however, signify something that will be said often later on, when in opposition to the teaching of a two-fold truth it will be pointed out that philosophy and theological truth have a common source from which both proceed, and that reason and faith are not contradictory. Eriugena set himself the task of defending the prerogative of logical insight over against human authority, which is not revelation but offers only its interpretation: "Each and every authority which is not supported by logical insight appears to be weak, whereas a genuine rational argument cannot be assailed because of its own inherent cogency."

### 3. DIALECTICIANS AND ANTI-DIALECTICIANS

If we except Eriugena, the ninth century failed to record any significant philosophic achievements. The tenth century still fewer. In contrast, the beginning of the eleventh century makes an impression on us because of the extremely heated dispute between the so-called Dialecticians and the Anti-Dialecticians. The dialectical art, as it was wont to be taught in the *Trivium*, appears to have been too heady a wine for many and to have become the instrument of both spleen and sport. Scholars left no subject untouched with their syllogisms and they solved all problems mechanically by their play on words without paying strict attention to the more profound and subtle contexts and associations. Anselm of Besate, the "Peripatetic," was a scholar of this type, as was Berengarius of Tours.

As the latter applied the philosophical method of reasoning to the

teachings of faith in a purely mechanical fashion, the counterparty acted equally highhandedly and rejected all philosophy. The leader of the opposition was St. Peter Damian (1007-1072). Just as the others made everything subservient to philosophy, Peter forced everything under the yoke of theology. In the sight of God the rules of logic were invalid: He could make actual happenings "unhappen." Man does not need the aid of philosophy to save his soul. Basically philosophy is an invention of the devil; only as handmaid of theology can it possibly find any application and use. The occasion which led to the coining of the frequently quoted maxim, *philosophia ancilla theologiae*, was therefore not in any way deeply profound. We consequently should refrain from seeing in it a motto for the spirit of Scholasticism. Actually it was voiced only on its periphery.

## II. ST. ANSELM OF CANTERBURY (1033-1109)

### FATHER OF SCHOLASTICISM

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) was born in Aosta, elected abbot of the monastery of Bec in Normandy, and later consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. In him early Scholasticism found itself. What had been done before his time should really be termed Pre-Scholasticism, as Grabmann has recommended. His two most renowned works are the *Monologium*, which deals with the wisdom of God, and the *Proslogium*, which treats of the existence of God.

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### 1. FIDES QUAERENS INTELLECTUM

St. Anselm is a philosopher who became great because of his connection with Augustine. From St. Augustine's genius was coined the motto that supplied Scholasticism with the directive for further development: *fides quaerens intellectum*. What had been in the works of St. Augustine a grandiose ideal was in Scholasticism so conceived and so developed in detail that it became a school of thought. The dogmas of faith are developed rationally; they are explained in accordance with logical points of view both in regard to their content and to their contexts and associations, and are drawn up in such a system that we are enabled to deduce one from the other and thus to understand them most thoroughly. This rationalism does not do away with the mysteries of faith, but seeks to give the deposit of faith a logical form, as far as that is possible. We may, for this reason, ask whether or not St. Anselm was also a philosopher, because his premises were always in the last analysis religious theses. "I do not wish to know in order to believe, but to believe in order to be able to know" is the explanation he offers for his position. His words concisely state the attitude toward philosophy by all the Scholastics. Anselm's thought united philosophical with theological problems. Even though he speaks as a theologian, he nevertheless covers the entire field of philosophy in his works.

### 2. THE ANSELMIAN PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

**His argument.** We are made aware of this immediately in the problem which brought St. Anselm such definite recognition in the

history of philosophy, in his proof for the existence of God as this is developed in the *Proslogium*. Kant pinned to this proof the name *ontological argument*. He had in mind, however, only the form which Descartes and Leibniz had given it. The thought had emerged in the work of St. Anselm and there it has the following content: Reason discovers within itself an idea that a Supreme Being can be "conceived" (*id quo maius cogitari non potest*: "that than which nothing greater can be conceived"). If this Being existed solely in the thoughts of the reasoning faculty, it would not be the Supreme Being, because a still greater Being could still be conceived, namely, a Being which had its existence not only in thought but also in reality. The idea of a Supreme Being, as a consequence, requires that it exist not only in the reason but also in reality.

**Criticism of the Anselmian argument.** The monk Gaunilo took objection to this reasoning: I think of a perfect island, he said, but it does not follow from my mere thought that the island itself exists. This is basically the same objection as that which Kant will later advance: The notion of a thing does not bestow existence upon that thing. If I think of a hundred dollars, I do not find them in my pocket. Of course Anselm knew this himself. For he says: If a painter conjures up within himself the idea of a future picture, the picture by that fact does not begin to exist (*Proslogium*, ch. ii). For this reason he defended his argument for the existence of God; and to the objection which Gaunilo had raised he gave as answer that in the example of the perfect island, he had failed to give the true state of the question. In the idea of God we have a unique and unparalleled case, because in it we conceive of a Being which possesses necessarily and from all eternity all perfections within itself, whereas in the island we are dealing only with a limited, a contingent being. By this he points out the unique feature of his argument; its core is to be found in the concept, "A Being that contains all perfection in itself."

**Historical origin of the proof.** This concept is no different from that of Boethius, who called God "the Being possessing within itself the sum of all good and all good things," *summum omnium bonorum cunctaque bona intra se continens*; it is nothing other than Augustine's concept of God as the "good of every good," *bonum omnis boni*; it is the same as the Platonic idea of Good and Plato's concept of the unconditioned first principle, the *ἀντιπόθετον*, of the self-sufficient being, the *ἰκανόν*. This appears even more clearly in his other masterpiece,

the *Monologium*. In it two typical Platonizing proofs for the existence of God are offered: one drawn from the various degrees of perfection and the other from the idea of the Supreme Being. St. Anselm did not complete and perfect a crossing over to another genus, a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, but he had in mind an a priori line of reasoning, namely, that all imperfection presupposes perfection which in the ontological order is prior. Since the imperfect is a reality, perfection must also certainly be a reality, in fact The Reality, in contrast to which the imperfect is only a copy. If we should then adduce the concept of truth which St. Anselm propounded, we would find that his proof for the existence of God becomes clearer.

**Anselmian concept of truth.** According to St. Anselm, the truth signifies "the rightness of the essence" which is considered to be proved by the fact that it corresponds with the exemplar in the mind of God. Truth is in the mind and is perceptible there alone (*Veritas est rectitudo sola mente perceptibilis*). It is always discovered when the mind uncovers the necessary intelligible associations that exist in being. Should our reasoning perceive in the idea of God a necessary connection between essence and existence, there would be revealed to us a basic primal truth. Only in this way can we conceive of truth in a copy, because it exists in a basic primal truth. For this reason we cannot say that St. Anselm unjustly made a transition from the intentional order to the real order. To him speculation and being were not so sundered from one another as they have become in modern times. In his day such a rending would have been premature. St. Anselm was imbued with the spirit of St. Augustine, and for this Platonizing thinker primal truth and primal goodness, the original exemplar and the idea, alone constitute reality. To this all other being and knowledge owe their existence, so that each one of us may ascend to God by a variety of paths.

**Influence.** The proof of the existence of God drawn up by St. Anselm exerted an influence deep into the golden age of Scholasticism and even into modern times. Although St. Thomas rejected it (*S. T.*, I, 2, 1 ad 2; *S. C. G.*, I, 10; *De Ver.*, 10, 12), William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, and Giles of Rome accepted it—in other words, all those philosophers in whom we can detect Augustinian and Platonizing tendencies. This is a key which also makes it possible for us to understand better the historical-philosophical character of the proof and its famous author.

### III. PETER ABELARD AND MEDIAEVAL SUBJECTIVISM

#### PERSONALITY AND WORK

The program of St. Anselm, namely, to delve deeply into the truths of faith, found an essentially technical challenge in the work of Abelard (1079–1142), a man who was conspicuous as much for his personality and his fascinating life as he was for his creative ability and his self-willed speculation. In order to raise problems and to encourage a more profound study of them, he developed more dialectically the method which had been authored by canonists such as Bernold of Constance, according to which contradictory "authorities" were compared with one another. This is the basic idea of his work: *Sic et Non* (*Yes and No*). This tractate exerted a strong influence upon the development of the Scholastic method, especially on the technique of the disputation, which, as we have already seen, formed the framework of the *Summas*. His chief ethical treatise bore the title *Ethica Seu Scito Teipsum*. His writings on logic, recently discovered by Geyer and Grabmann, place him, as Grabmann states, "in the forefront of the philosophical greats of the Middle Ages."

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#### 1. THE QUESTION OF THE UNIVERSALS

**Occasion.** The importance of Abelard for the history of philosophy is marked by the position he adopted in regard to the problem of universals, which was much discussed in his day. Boethius, the great authority of the Middle Ages, had made this problem ripe for development. He had begun as an Aristotelian and ended as a Platonist

(see above, p. 340). Since scholars were constantly studying his writings, they encountered this fertile and as yet unsolved question. To this impetus we may add its actuality in theological matters. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, treats of three Persons in one God; and the doctrine of the redemption enunciated the fact that original sin tainted mankind in its origin. How should the universal concepts, divinity or mankind, be understood in these connections?

**Traditional theories.** 1) *Realism.* There had been conflicting opinions on this point for a long time. The two extremes were realism and nominalism. Realism, which has also been called ultrarealism in contradistinction to critical realism, was the older solution (*antiqui doctores*). Plato had assumed universals which existed independently in themselves before all things else—to use the language of his opponents (*universalia ante res*). The mediaeval realists were not advocates of this doctrine of ideas, but placed the universals in existing things—we detect here the new notion of reality. They were, however, of the belief that all particulars, in contradistinction to the species, denoted nothing new but were already present in the universals. The soul of the individual human being, for instance, would not be a special substance when God created it, but only a peculiarity or a characteristic of an already existing “mankind.” Original sin as the guilt of every individual human being could thus be more readily explained and understood. Odo of Turin (before 1092) as well as Gerbert of Rheims, who later became Pope Sylvester II (d. 1003), were of this opinion. The most renowned champion of this view was William of Champeaux (1070–1120). The universal essence of species constituted for him an entirely particular substance, so that the individual was no longer peculiar or distinctive but was at most only a modification. Similarly, the species is only an accident of the genus and hence possesses no special substantiality.

2) *Nominalism.* The more modern movement, which as early as the ninth century was represented, for example, by Heiric of Auxerre, refused to see in the universals any universal real entities (*res*) but only objects (things) of thought (*nuda intellecta*). Whatever exists must always be particular. In the eleventh century a group of anti-realistic masters maintained that the universals were nothing more than mere names (*voces, nomina*), hence anything but things (*res*). Their chief representative was Roscelin of Compiègne (c. 1050–c. 1120). To him the universals were mere sounds (*flatus vocis*); this was a somewhat stronger expression and by it he sought only

to institute a comparison between the names and the things denoted by them. We must not think that this primitive nominalism was prompted by and flourished in the scepticism of the fourteenth century, nor by modern conceptualism, according to which our notions are not in contact with being itself and consequently are reduced to mere concepts. On the contrary, Roscelin was influenced externally by the concept of logic proposed by Boethius. This concept, in the tradition of Aristotle, was strongly conditioned by grammatical considerations; and it considered especially names and their customary relationships. In accordance with this he could assume that the *voices* adequately reproduced the circumstances of being which belonged to them. In any case, his thesis that all reality was of necessity individual reality led in theological matters to Tritheism; for a divinity which could be ascribed in the same manner universally of all three Persons could, in conformity with such a concept, not be conceived to exist without being multiplied.

**Abelard.** 1) *Dispute with William of Champeaux.* The answer to the problem was construed differently by his pupil Abelard. His outlook was more critical and more subjective. Behind the opposition to realism and to his heated debate with William of Champeaux we can detect something more than a mere scholastic disputation. Actually we come to grips with the kind of scepticism that he entertained in regard to metaphysics. In the beginning he made sport of William of Champeaux. He argued: If the specific essence represents everything that belongs to the individual, then there would be no such thing as different men but always only one man, *the man*; in fact there would and could exist only the ten categories. In these all being is exemplified and exhausted.

Abelard then asks his opponent: How can there arise those differences which we see plainly with our own eyes? Would we not be forced to assume that one and the same essence was the sustainer of mutually contradictory properties—for example, would not substance be both living and dead, good and bad at one and the same time? Is not this contrary to the principle of contradiction? And if the species is all in all, why then is that not also true of the genus and the supreme genera, the ten categories or God, as far as that goes, as Eriugena had maintained.

We have not advanced a single step forward. Under the pressure of these arguments William of Champeaux altered his opinion and taught thenceforth that every particular thing is actually something

specific, distinct, and special; individuality is something outside the specific essence. That we are able to predicate of things something that is common to all of them is due to the fact that things possess a certain similarity and insofar they do not differ from one another. But Abelard pressed his point even more strongly: How can particular things be similar one to another when their individuality is something entirely distinct and proper? In his first solution, William failed to do justice to the particular; now he fails utterly in regard to the universal. The discussion which was carried on in connection with these points was indeed heated, and soon one and then the other of these fighting gamecocks was forced to flee the arena in Paris. Meanwhile, Abelard had embarked on his love affair that turned out to be even more vehement than the discussions. But in spite of everything he emerged the victor. He was the "master of dialectics."

2) *His solution.* His solution of the problem was decidedly worthwhile. What is actual must be individual or particular. True knowledge exists, but it is only of individual things. Universal concepts are only opinions. Frequently we have a distinct image of a city. If we should, however, see the city as it is, we would realize that our image was poor and indistinct. "Thus, I believe that much the same thing is true of inner forms, which cannot be perceived by the senses." Universal concepts offer, as a consequence, no basis for actual knowledge; they are rather confused images. We cannot, however, designate them as mere words nor as knowledge of the internal constituents of things. Only God possesses such knowledge. Man is dependent on the external features, on the accidents, and with their help tries to describe things; but whatever he says of them does not advance beyond the subjective content of their meanings (*sermones*). These contents are subjective because they always depend upon our representations and our attention — what we abstract from things and what we inject into the universal concept. For this reason we could possibly and with little opposition call the universal a fictitious reality (*res ficta*). Universal concepts are *in intellectu solo et nudo et puro*. The "essence" which is posited by the universal concept is a thing of the human mind and not a thing of being (*ad attentionem refertur, non ad modum subsistendi*).

We might imagine that we were listening to a modern Englishman. The revolutionary aspect of this theory becomes apparent when we recall that for Plato and Augustine the universal was most precious and the foundation both of knowledge and of truth; that also for

Aristotle and Boethius abstraction did not take place at the cost of the subjective image but reproduced "the inner forms" of objects, and that this universal form in turn formed the object of knowledge. Later on, St. Thomas Aquinas will espouse the same view, although he holds fast to the basic principle that we know all that we know in accordance with the special forms of our mind. According to him we read the text of being, but only in a translation into our mother tongue; the text remains the same, however, no matter the language into which it has been translated. We hear not only our own words or our own constructions, but we also read the objective text. Abelard thinks otherwise. According to him nature no longer speaks to us, but we speak about nature and we express ourselves each according to his own subjective viewpoint. In any case, whatever we say is only our opinion of being. We do not create being, as modern reasoning expresses it; we only interpret it. To this extent, Abelard is still the mediaeval man, although he had advanced far beyond his contemporaries when he dealt with the knowledge of subjective elements in these "opinions."

## 2. ETHICS

**His teaching.** In his speculation on ethics Abelard also greatly distinguished himself. What had been looked upon as a matter of course in Patristic times, namely, that moral actions considered under the aspect of value proceeded from knowledge and from the will with intention and freedom, had to a great extent become "lost" in the generations before Abelard. In the fury unleashed by the migration of the nations, the Germanic races reached their maturity as a people, and the Anglo-Saxon invasion made plentiful use of a sturdy justice; and this administration of justice (in its legal forms) had distorted the concept of morality. In the penitential books (*libri poenitentiales*) which served as a kind of catechism of morality, the value of the moral action was judged simply on the basis of the external facts of the case. The juridical rather than the moral imputation was permitted to become the decisive factor in the case. The principle "the deed murdereth the man" was a principle of law, especially in its Germanic acceptation. This material *lex talionis*, exemplified chiefly in the justice of the Old Testament, continued to exert an influence. In the Synods of Paris (829), Worms (868), and Tribur (895), the Church opposed such practices, but it still continued to haunt the minds of men.

Abelard now arose to assail it; his purpose was to return the intention to its rightful place in morality. He distinguished clearly between the will (*intentio, consensus*) and the act (*opus*). "The judge who orders an innocent man executed whom he believes he must legally condemn, the groundkeeper who looses an arrow at a deer and with it kills a man, a husband who sleeps with a strange woman whom he believes to be his wife, and a man who marries his own sister without recognizing her as such, a mother who while sleeping suffocates her child; none of these have committed a sin because of the intention with which they performed the actions." The alleged examples are drawn almost exclusively from the penitential manuals. Through them we can better realize what was at stake for Abelard. In his usual impulsive fashion he overshot the mark. If in matters pertaining to good and evil intention and consent are questionable, the sinful action, according to his explanation, is "without substance" (*nullam esse substantiam peccati*). And the next step: If the intention is good, the act itself must be good. "We call an act good not because it contains in itself something good, but because it is performed with a good intention."

**Its limitations.** Of this we can say that it is at least not precise. That the intention does constitute a necessary assumption for moral goodness is evident; that it comprises everything, that is to say, that it contains all the constituents of a morally right action we cannot admit. Would that morality suffice which for an entire lifetime contented itself merely with activating the intention without ever arriving at a life that was led in conformity with its principles? The intention has no value in itself, but is only the path to the act and can best be judged by the act itself. We make an intention simply because a certain action must be performed; this is the actual and the natural association for the existence of an intention. Without an action to which it is joined the intention is inane. Of itself it could never generate a good action or produce a good deed. If in many instances we permit the will to pass for the action, in good deeds as well as in bad, we do so not because we are not at all concerned about the action but because the act itself would never have taken place were it not for some definite reason. In this case the will would by way of exception pass for the act itself. Precisely in this "by way of exception" we recognize that the most important element in morality is normally the act itself.

Does not a morality, furthermore, which always stresses the inten-

tion run the risk of becoming lost in subjectivism and individualism? Abelard foresaw this danger and tried to avoid it. "The intention is not good simply because it appears to be good, but because it is actually what we think it to be." By this distinction he clamped the brakes on subjectivism. There are objective norms by which we must be guided. As in the theory of knowledge, so also in ethics, Abelard held to a metaphysical order which we must attempt to interpret and to understand. He saw the influence of the subjective in these attempts, but did not by that fact become a pure subjectivist. It is as logical as it is characteristic of him that he withdrew his thesis: the Jews did not sin when they crucified Christ and stoned Stephen. Mediaeval subjectivism was not modern perspectivism or relativism, in which truth is no longer held to exist and which allows men, now the rabble, now the individual, to determine what truth should be.

### 3. AFTEREFFECTS

Abelard succeeded in gathering around himself enthusiastic students, and his influence upon the development of Scholasticism was great. The future Popes, Alexander III and Celestine II, sat at his feet; so did John of Salisbury and Peter Lombard. Even Gratian, the renowned canonist, was dependent upon him. Above all else it was his *Sic et Non* method which formed the basis of his school and actually contributed to its formation. This technique was simply absorbed by the Scholastic method. Abelard strongly influenced not only the theological literature known as the *Sentences*, but he also made a lasting impression on the still unpublished commentaries of the Aristotelian-Boethian logic of the twelfth century (see M. Grabmann, "Bearbeitungen der aristotelischen Logik aus der Zeit von Peter Abelard bis Petrus Hispanus," in *Berliner Akademieabhandlungen*, 1937).

## IV. THE SCHOOL OF CHARTRES AND MEDIAEVAL HUMANISM

### 1. CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL

The founding of the school was due to the efforts of Fulbert of Chartres toward the end of the tenth century. The golden epoch of the school was reached in the twelfth century, in those years which immediately preceded the building of the great cathedral of Chartres. With it we stand directly before the portals of the Golden Age of

Scholasticism, for here we can witness most clearly the approach of new ideas as they will enter into the minds of men. In view of the comprehensive and sensitive study of ancient literature which it fostered, it has sometimes been said that this school was humanistic. True, it was in this school that the "new logic"—the hitherto unknown writings of the Aristotelian *Organon* (the two *Analytics*, *Topics* and the *Elenctic*)—first found acceptance. They were to become of utmost importance for the cultivation of natural science in Scholasticism. In this school also we can, for the first time, detect an acquaintanceship with the thoughts of Aristotle's writings on physics. In like fashion in this school we can find an evaluation of the writings on the natural sciences and medicine which had been authored by Hippocrates and Galen. To these we should add the works of the Arabians on these same subjects, viz., natural sciences and medicine (in the translations of Constantius Africanus who became a monk of Monte Cassino about the middle of the eleventh century). The school was sharply oriented in the direction of the natural sciences. In philosophy the basic tendency was Platonic. The students fastened on the *Timaeus* and used Boethius, who for his part had also worked over the *Timaeus* (see H. Liebschütz, "Kosmologische Motive in der Bildungswelt der Frühscholastik," in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1923–1924).

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### 2. THE MEN OF CHARTRES

**Bernard.** In its classical period we find that it was Bernard of Chartres (d. 1124) who was the natural leader of the school. John of Salisbury calls him "the greatest Platonist of our century." But

Bernard also treasured Aristotle highly and with almost tireless energy tried to effect a compromise between these two great philosophers of ancient times. Bernard supplied new arguments for the intensive reading of the classics and of classical literature on the whole, and in so doing ushered humanism into the school of Chartres.

**Thierry.** His younger brother, Thierry (or Theodoric) of Chartres, guided the destinies of the school from 1140 onward. In his commentary on Genesis (*De sex dierum operibus*), he reconciled the tradition of Plato and Chalcidius with the Bible. His *Heptateuchon*, a textbook on the seven liberal arts, contains excerpts from over forty different works and thus furnishes us with a treasury of information on the literary life of the first half of the twelfth century. Thierry also cultivated a Platonizing philosophy. The elements of his metaphysics are unity (the one) and plurality (numbers). The one is eternal and unchangeable; it is identical with God. Numbers are changeable, for change is numbered; and so by numbers we prove the existence of created beings. Just as all numbers begin with and proceed from the one, so the whole world comes forth from God. But if the forms of all things are also in the mind of God, and if the divinity thus molds the form of individual things (*divinitas singulis rebus forma essendi est*), the difference between creator and creature is not obliterated, because God cannot become matter (*divinitas immateriari non potest*). Thierry therefore expounded his thesis in the sense of Augustinian exemplarism. We are also reminded immediately of the Pseudo-Areopagite and still more of the Pythagorizing speculation of the mature Plato concerning ideas and numbers; the same views will also be represented in Renaissance times by Nicholas of Cusa. The school of Chartres formed, then, an important link in the great idealistic chain which stretches from Plato to Hegel.

**Gilbert de la Porrée.** Another important figure in this school was Gilbert de la Porrée (d. 1154), with his tract on the six final categories of Aristotle (*liber sex principorum*) which supplied the groundwork for logic in the University of Paris during the thirteenth century.

**William of Conches.** William of Conches (d. 1145) wrote a commentary on the Platonic Dialogue, *Timaeus*, a gloss to *De Consolazione Philosophiae* of Boethius, and three different presentations of philosophy (*philosophia mundi*).

**John of Salisbury.** John of Salisbury (d. 1180) in his *Metalogicus* gives us invaluable information on the logic of his day and on the various tendencies discernible in the dispute over the universals, and

through his *Policraticus* exercised some influence on the theories of political philosophy propounded in the Middle Ages, especially in whatever concerns the attitude of subjects toward a tyrant, whose forceful deposition he held to be lawful and justifiable.

**Otto of Freising.** Bishop Otto of Freising (d. 1158) was closely associated with the school. He was the one who for the first time introduced the whole Aristotelian logic into Germany. The tendencies of the school were turned into pantheistic channels by Amalric of Bènes and David of Dinant in the second half of the twelfth century. The former held that God was the form; the latter, the *materia prima* of all things.

## V. MYSTICISM

Our picture of early Scholasticism would not be complete if we did not mention mysticism. We must not think that Scholasticism understood only the language of reason and lacked warmth of feeling; on the other hand, we must not hold that in its religious *élan* mysticism placed itself beyond the pale of Scholastic theories.

### 1. ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

We must name first of all the Cistercian, St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153). He left his imprint on the twelfth century much as had Abelard. Bernard assailed the "windy babblings of the philosophers," not because he personally despised knowledge, but simply because he wished to place it upon surer footing. The beginning of all knowledge of the truth does not originate in the intellect but in humility. In it all the interests of the ego are reduced to silence and when silence prevails we can become candid and receptive of the truth. Faith and resignation to the will of God are more important than dialectics. For this reason true philosophy was for St. Bernard the love of Christ and Him crucified. In and through Him St. Bernard became most intimately united with divine wisdom. On this road St. Bernard distinguished three stages: the *consideration*, in which we collect and search; the *contemplation*, in which we grasp the truth in trustful surrender and contemplation; and the *ecstasy*, in which we divest ourselves of our personal ego and in mystical union lose ourselves in God, as does a drop of water in wine. St. Bernard was, as St. Augustine before him, a religious genius who envisaged the possibilities of human nature and thereby afforded the philosopher many otherwise latent insights and vantage points.

## 2. THE VICTORINES

How wrong it would be to believe that mysticism trod a different intellectual path from Scholasticism is demonstrated for us by the Augustinian canons of the monastery of St. Victor outside the gates of Paris. Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), a German Count of Blankenburg, sought to cultivate all worldly sciences. When the Anti-Dialecticians maintained, "The study of philosophy is useless," he countered by saying, "Learn everything and you will soon discover that nothing is in vain." Whereas the mysticism of Bernard is founded more on Pauline and on Joannine doctrine, in the Victorines Neo-Platonic views were revived. Hugh wrote a wonderful commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, in which profound religious speculation and mystical depth of feeling are cleverly intermingled. Its influence on later philosophy and theology was considerable. Thus, for example, Pope Boniface VIII drew the principal statements of his Bull, *Unam Sanctam*, from the writings of Hugh. Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) was of the same mind. Especially dear to him was the doctrine of "the sparklets of the soul," which will later on play such a great role in mysticism.

# CHAPTER 18

## THE DAWN OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCHOLASTICISM

### INTRODUCTION: THE NEW FORCES

The progressive spiritual movements of the twelfth century were supported by three additional factors which made themselves felt at approximately the same time and served as new inspirations for the entire epoch. These three were the reception accorded to Aristotle, the growth of the universities, and the scientific pursuits of the nascent religious orders. Through these there was effected that flowering of mediaeval speculation which we are accustomed to think of as the golden age of Scholasticism.

### THE RECEPTION ACCORDED TO ARISTOTLE

This reception was inaugurated in the twelfth century and ended in the thirteenth. It was accomplished in two ways: one, indirect, through the Arabian-Jewish philosophy; and another, direct, through translations from the Greek originals themselves.

#### 1. INDIRECTLY BY WAY OF THE ARABIAN-JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

That portion of Arabian-Jewish philosophy which influenced the Middle Ages was not specifically the speculation which was proper to Islamism or to Judaism, but an Aristotelianism as viewed in the light of the Neo-Platonic commentaries.

**Arabian philosophy.** *1) Aristotle among the Syrians.* The Arabians reached Aristotle by way of the Syrians. From the fifth to the tenth centuries, Christian scholars (the Nestorian school of Edessa together with Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus, as well as the Monophysite school of Resaina and Chalcis) were in possession of a number of Aristotelian writings, in particular the *Organon*, as

well as the *Introduction* of Porphyry and the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, translated into Syriac and implemented by the commentaries. After the Arabs had conquered Syria and Persia, they expropriated the philosophy of their victims. The Abbasides invited Syrian scholars to the court of Baghdad and saw to it that the works of the Greeks were translated into Arabic, partly from Syrian, partly from Greek texts and sources. The Caliph El-Mamoun set up a special staff of translators in Baghdad (832). Besides the Aristotelian works, the Arabs delved into still other types of Greco-Syrian literature, into Theophrastus, Galen, Hippocrates, Euclid, Archimedes, and also into a whole series of commentaries on Aristotle, for example, those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Themistius, and Ammonius.

2) *Neo-Platonic commentaries on Aristotle.* From this we can see that with the exception of Alexander all the authors used and consulted were exclusively Neo-Platonists, who explained Aristotle according to their own lights. In fact, Arabian philosophy became the channel, as it were, through which revived Neo-Platonism poured into the Middle Ages, and this after the Middle Ages had already become acquainted with it as a portion of its Patristic heritage. The doctrine of intelligences and emanation, the idea of a gradation of beings, the idea of the oneness of intellect in all men, the concept of eternal matter, the doctrine of a mystical union were spread abroad in a special manner by the Arabs.

3) *Theology of Aristotle and the Liber de Causis.* The Neo-Platonic interpretation of Aristotle was still further influenced by two works with which the Middle Ages became familiar through the Arabians and which scholars held to be Aristotelian: the so-called "Theology of Aristotle" which was in reality an excerpt from Books Four and Six of Plotinus' *Enneads*, and the *Liber de Causis* which represents a portion of the *Elementatio Theologica* (Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική) of Proclus — a work which St. Thomas Aquinas himself consulted.

4) *Alfarabi.* A cross-fertilization of Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic ideas was incorporated into the speculation of Arabian philosophy. For Alfarabi (d. 950), for example, beings of various degrees emanate from the Divine Being. Among the first of these grades we can find the spiritual substances or intelligences, which as souls set the spheres into motion. Of these intelligences one is the Aristotelian agent intellect.

5) *Avicenna.* Similar thoughts were entertained by Avicenna (Ibn

Sina, 980-1037), who was frequently quoted by the Scholastics. According to him, the world is the eternal product of an eternal God. In this theory the idea of emanation again finds use and application. From God proceed the highest of the intelligences. From them, in turn, emanate one after another the subordinated spirits of the spheres, who by their providence (thought and will) govern the world in all its minute detail. God does not trouble Himself about the individual, but confines Himself to and knows only the universal. In addition, matter is conceived to be eternal. To Avicenna matter is also the principle of individuation.

6) *Averroës*. Averroës of Cordoba (Ibn Roschid, d. 1198) appears to be more Aristotelian, for according to him the intelligences owe their existence to a creative act. The Word was created by God, but It is eternal. In his philosophy the intelligences also impart motion to the spheres and for him the last of these intelligences is also the *intellectus agens*. This is the cosmic force which starts on its orbit the created moon. But this intellect is only one in all men, so that the individual human being does not possess a distinct substantial soul nor is he endowed with personal immortality. Only the soul of mankind is immortal. Matter is likewise eternal and contains within itself the fullness of all natural dispositions and forms. Their actualization (*extractio*) is responsible for every happening both in the natural order and in the cosmic process. These theses, especially the one dealing with monopsychism, furnished Scholasticism with subject matter for protracted debates. St. Thomas refuted it in his work, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*. Averroës enjoyed great esteem among his contemporaries and was looked upon as the commentator of Aristotle *par excellence*. There were three versions of his commentaries: the large ones, the small ones, and the *Paraphrases*.

7) *Algazel*. Averroës' quarrel with Algazel (Ghazali, d. 1111) is interesting because it represents a parallel to the incidental conflict between religion and philosophy within the framework of Christian Scholasticism. To preserve the religious content of Islamism against the encroachments of philosophy, Algazel wrote the work *Destructio Philosophorum* (*Destruction of the Philosophers*). Nothing daunted, Averroës defended the rights of reason (*ratio*) in his famous *Destructio Destructionis* (*Destruction of the Destruction*). The basic thought of this work was that philosophy does not propose to supplant religion; both philosophy and religion search for and examine truth, each in its own way. This is not the doctrine of the

later Averroists on two kinds of truth. According to Averroës only words differ, the matter remains the same; whereas for the Averroists, religion and philosophy have for their own proper object incommensurable goals.

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**Jewish philosophy.** 1) *Avencebrol.* The Jewish philosophy which exerted pressure on Scholasticism was essentially influenced by Arabian philosophy. As a consequence, it was again a Neo-Platonic interpretation of Aristotle which asserted itself anew. Avencebrol (Avicembron — Salomon ibn Gebirol, d. 1070) championed a pantheism based on emanation. In his chief work, *Fons Vitae*, he establishes that God is the source of life, from which all being flows — being that is divided naturally into various degrees of value (a hierarchy of value). The cosmic spirit proceeds directly from God. This spirit is composed of matter and form, two principles which characterize being in all its various guises. From time to time they merge to form a unitary, uniform substance, but they are two real and distinct principles. Descending from this cosmic spirit in a downward scale, emanation splits into two directions: into the corporeal and into the spiritual world. In both these worlds matter and form remain the principles of being; besides, a great variety of forms can be found in individual substances. By these two theses, Avencebrol gave a definite impetus to philosophical discussion. Even St. Thomas Aquinas took issue with him.

2) *Maimonides*. Moses Maimonides (d. 1204) was a profound student of Aristotle. He it was whom St. Thomas Aquinas greatly esteemed and upon whom he drew more than once for his teaching on creation and for his proofs for the existence of God. In these proofs Maimonides depended on Alfarabi and Avicenna but more especially on Aristotle. He took exception to the latter in the matter of the eternity of the world; and he held to a creation out of nothing. He introduced his principal work, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, with twenty-five statements, "of which we stand in need to prove the existence of God as well as to show that He is neither a body, nor a force that can be found in a body, finally, to demonstrate that He is unique." These statements offer a striking exposition of the basic thoughts that are contained in both the physics and the metaphysics of Aristotle, as the Middle Ages knew them. This Jewish philosopher, like Averroës, called Spain his home.

3) *Toledo*. Spain was the great center through which the Arabian-Jewish philosophy found entry into the Middle Ages. In Toledo there was a school especially set up for the task of translating. In the middle of the twelfth century, the works of Alfarabi, Avicenna, Algazel, Avencebro were put into Latin by Dominicus Gundissalinus, John of Spain, and Gerard of Cremona. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, to these versions were added the works of Averroës in the translations of Michael Scotus and Hermann the German. Around 1250, the majority of these were already well known and on all sides could be seen at work the creative impulses sparked by them.

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## 2. DIRECT TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK

Renewed philosophical activity became increasingly great after scholars became acquainted with Aristotle in his entirety through translations from the original Greek. Until the middle of the twelfth century, the Scholastics had known of Aristotle only indirectly through Porphyry's introduction and the tractates of Boethius (*De Divisione* and *De Differentiis Topicis*) along with the latter's commentaries on the *Categories* and the *Perihermenias*. In fact, it was only the last two works of Aristotle which were accessible, and then only in the translation of Boethius. These were all the writings with which the West could work. From them it would have appeared as if the Stagirite had been only a logician. The Arabian-Jewish philosophers gave only an indirect approach to Aristotle's thoughts, for among them his philosophy had been splintered into a thousand fragments and had been viewed in a myriad of ways, much as the light of the sun is split by a prism into a variety of colors. His thought had been translated from the Greek into Syriac; from the Syriac into Arabic; from Arabic—when possible also by way of Old Spanish—into Latin. From this we can well imagine how difficult it must have been to determine the spirit and meaning of the Stagirite, especially since the Neo-Platonic commentaries offered entirely unique interpretations of his thought. We can also readily perceive the great advance that was made when Aristotle was directly translated from the Greek into Latin and when all his works, not only those on logic, were available. This undertaking began as early as the middle of the twelfth century. In regard to it there is only one name of which we can be certain, and that is Henricus Aristippus of Catania (d. 1162), who translated the fourth book of *Meteorology* and *De Generatione et Corruptione*. But we are aware also that before the year 1200, the *Physics*, *De Anima*, and *Metaphysics* I to IV (*Metaphysica Vetustissima*) among others were already known in the original Greek. The entire work was brought to completion only at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The most famous of these translators were Bartholomew of Messina, Robert Grosseteste, and William of Moerbeke. The latter worked especially for St. Thomas Aquinas. To these we may also add the translations of the commentaries done by Alexander of Aphrodisias,

Themistius, Simplicius, Eustratius, Aspasius, Ammonius, Michael and John Philoponus. Literary and historical researches into the infiltration by the Greek Aristotle of the Middle Ages are still in progress. For details of this monumental task consult the authoritative works of M. Grabmann, A. Pelzer, F. Pelster, A. Mansion, G. Lacombe, and many others (general survey by M. De Wulf, *Histoire de phil. med. I* [6 ed.], 64 ff.; II [6 ed.], 25 ff.; cf. English translation [E. Messenger], Vol. I, pp. 58-72).

### 3. SCHOLASTIC "ARISTOTELIANISM"

A realistic study of Aristotle based on the principles refined in the history of philosophy must be pushed still further. This research must show precisely how far the reception of Aristotle into Scholasticism was limited solely to the terminology which he used and how much farther his actual thought penetrated. The fact that St. Albert the Great, despite his Aristotelianism, also speculated in a Neo-Platonic fashion or that St. Thomas in his teaching on man, on eternal happiness, on knowledge—to mention only a few topics—was more or less closely allied with St. Augustine in spite of his Aristotelian terminology, would almost necessarily cause us to pause and to ask for a re-evaluation of Aristotelianism as it was known in the Middle Ages. So thorough a student of Platonism and Aristotelianism as A. E. Taylor was of the opinion that in the most decisive points of mediaeval philosophy Platonism was never supplanted, and he mentioned further, in passing, that the scholastic Aristotelianism was a sheer external accessory (*Platonism and Its Influence*, 2 ed., 1927). This may be a trifle exaggerated. In his work on Platonism and the Middle Ages, E. Hoffmann expounded a diametrically opposite thesis (*Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1923/24): Genuine Platonism had never so much as contributed a single important element for the formation of an ecclesiastical philosophical system.

In any case, a discussion of the relation between the older Platonic-Augustinian tradition and the newer Aristotelianism in the golden era of Scholasticism will in the future be forced to take into consideration the new theory that has been propounded for the Scholastic Aristotle by W. Jaeger in his important studies. Up to the present, whenever scholars run across the name or the texts of Aristotle in scholastic works, they tend to interpret them in the light of the concept of Aristotle that had for a long time been taken for granted—a concept which saw in these two great Greek philosophers,

Aristotle and Plato, a very sharp and pointed antithesis. Such a concept was the image of Aristotle current in the nineteenth century: Aristotle, the "realist," opposed to Plato, the "idealist." And the conflict between the two great tendencies in the mediaeval schools only lent it credence. Jaeger's book, however, has shown that Aristotle was conscious of the fact that "he was the first Greek who saw the real world with the eyes of Plato." Consequently, the nineteenth-century assumption has become controversial.

If we consider, furthermore, that Boethius, the first great authority of the Middle Ages, had entertained the same conviction, and that the first Scholastics were convinced that between Plato and Aristotle true accord would seem to have existed; and if we add to these considerations the further fact that even the Arabians had suggested an Aristotle who must be viewed with Neo-Platonic spectacles, and that furthermore a majority of the commentaries intimated a like suggestion, then we might possibly hazard the guess that in the future the interpretation of the Scholastic Aristotle, by reason of its Platonic speculation, will have to be pursued more in line with a concordance than with a discrepancy that was thought to have existed. What we offer here must not be considered the final word. We wish to state the true case and to open a new field of debate on this problem of Aristotle and Plato, which was frequently viewed and more frequently perhaps believed, simply on the basis of the words that were used and of the Scholastic antitheses which were revealed in them. We wish, furthermore, to call to mind the fact that there were external Scholastic antithetical tendencies in the Schools themselves. For these reasons in this book we have treated in our exposition of Aristotle's philosophy the Platonic element much more fully than is usually the case.

#### 4. PROHIBITIONS OF THE WRITINGS OF ARISTOTLE

As is customary in such cases, the course of historical growth at first saw only something different in the new philosophical development—specifically, the introduction of Aristotle. As a result, it ultimately became naturalized and was finally adopted not without difficulty. As early as 1210, a Parisian provincial council forbade reading the works of Aristotle on natural philosophy as well as any commentaries on them. But the traditional study of Aristotelian logic was permitted to continue undisturbed. This prohibition stemmed, it would seem, from the official ecclesiastical position which had been

taken in opposition to the pantheism of Amalric of Bènes and David of Dinant as these had been inspired by Neo-Platonism. Since the scholars saw in the Arabian Aristotle an obvious kinship with Neo-Platonism, Aristotle himself was brought into disrepute. In Toulouse, where no pantheistic professors lectured—Amalric was in Paris—no such prohibition was raised against Aristotle. There, as also among the English, the study of Aristotle's work on physics was carried on with vigor. Soon it began to be noised about that Aristotle was not only not a pantheist but that his philosophy was seemingly in accord with Scholastic speculation. Awareness of this fact gradually reached Paris, and although in 1245 and again in 1263 two further prohibitions were enacted against Aristotle, the triumphal march of the Stagirite could no longer be halted. The prohibitions were forgotten. Pope Gregory IX had furthermore declared in 1231 that philosophical writings were in general to be forbidden only so long as it took competent theologians to determine their value. By this declaration the gate was thrown open for the further ingress of Aristotle. In 1366, matters had proceeded so far that the legates of the Pope demanded as an indispensable condition for licentiate on the faculty of arts the study of the complete Aristotle. (Cf. M. Grabmann, *I divieti ecclesiastici di Aristotele sotto Innocenzo III e Gregorio IX* [Roma, 1941]; *Guglielmo di Moerbeke, il traduttore delle opere di Aristotele* [Roma, 1941].)

## THE UNIVERSITIES

A second factor that contributed mightily to the golden age of Scholasticism is to be found in the growing influence of the universities, especially that of Paris. For a long time this city had been the center of science, and renowned teachers such as Abelard and the Victorines had attracted students from all quarters of the globe. The loose scholastic groups in the city gradually formed more intimate ties, and as a result, at the turn of the twelfth century, there arose the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarum* which was at first nothing more than what the guilds were, namely, a common pool or agency of interests. Through the kings of France, but especially through the Popes, the newly formed scholastic communities were favored with generous donations and were thus enabled to develop ever more and more fully. In these universities, finally, the four faculties of medicine, law, arts, and theology were to be found. As

knowledge of the complete Aristotle grew, the importance of the faculty devoted to his study increased greatly; for the faculty then not only offered the purely propedeutical work of the seven liberal arts, but it was obliged to take over the entire course of philosophy. Other universities were *de facto* older than Paris, namely, Bologna and Salerno. These had, however, at first possessed only legal and medical faculties respectively. Somewhat later we find Oxford, which was only a little less renowned than Paris. Of course, Paris was called the *civitas philosophorum par excellence*.

### THE ORDERS

Of greater importance was the scientific life which pulsated in the Dominican and Franciscan Orders. They each possessed independent houses of study, for example, at Oxford, Rome, Naples, Cologne. In them were trained and educated an entire generation of learned and renowned scholars. In addition, the Popes endowed various chairs of learning in the different universities. SS. Bonaventure and Thomas were professors at Paris. The growth of these orders did not proceed without opposition. In the ensuing conflict with the diocesan clergy who apparently were troubled by the competition which the orders offered, as well as in the controversies among the orders themselves—the Dominicans favored Aristotelianism, whereas the Franciscans held for the Platonic-Augustinian tradition—war or verbal conflict was, as has frequently been the case, the father of many things.

### I. THE SCHOOL OF OXFORD: MATHEMATICS AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

We begin our presentation of the golden era of Scholasticism with the school of Oxford, because in it the continuity with the ancient tradition was strongest, and also because we wish to counteract the widespread prejudice that the golden era of Scholasticism was only a slavelike mechanical adoration and serflike imitation of Aristotle. Aristotle was known in Oxford; the founder of the school was one of his most famous translators. But Oxford adopted a critical attitude toward Aristotle. To a great extent, this attitude caused the school to be much more receptive of the natural sciences which were pursued by the Arabians. Oxford likewise cherished the heritage of Chartres and cultivated the study of mathematics and physics. Paris, on the

contrary, evinced little interest in these subjects. Before all else Oxford, and this has always been a peculiar trait of English philosophy, inclined toward empiricism, although in its fundamental attitude it remained true to Augustinian Platonism. The beginnings of Oxford may be traced to the traditional holders of this mental outlook, namely, the Franciscans, who were summoned there by the founder of the school, Robert Grosseteste.

### 1. ROBERT GROSSETESTE

Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253) was, in the words of Roger Bacon, "a scientist without a peer . . . for he understood mathematics and optics and in addition knew so many languages that he was able to read in their own language the Fathers and the philosophers and the wise men of the past." He taught in Oxford at the house of studies belonging to the Minorites; after 1208 he became chancellor of the university and in 1235 Bishop of Lincoln. He lavished special attention upon St. Augustine and St. Anselm. He was the first to translate the *Nicomachean Ethics* from the Greek into Latin together with different commentaries. From these St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas drew their knowledge of certain Greek words. His *Opuscula Philosophica* (edited by Baur in the *Baeumker-Beiträge*, Vol. 9) betrays even in its titles the scientific approach of this great man: *On Light* and *On the Origin of Forms*; *On Lines, Angles, Figures* or *On the Refraction and the Reflection of Rays*; *On the Rainbow*; *On Colors*; *On the Warmth of the Sun*; *On Bodily Movements and Light*; *On the Limits of Motion and of Time*, among others (cf. S. H. Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln 1235–1253* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940]; *On Light*, trans. Clare Riedl [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1946]).

**His metaphysics of light.** Especially characteristic of Grosseteste is his metaphysics of light. This was an old theme that had been dealt with frequently by the Neo-Platonists. Grosseteste's purpose in treating of it was to construct a metaphysics of being and of becoming in general. Light is indeed a body, but it is such a tenuous and refined substance that it stands midway between ideality and reality. Light forms the principle of corporeality, its form. "Light is diffused in all directions in accordance with its own peculiar nature, so that from one point there is thrown off a light as big as you might choose, just so long as darkness proves to be no hindrance to it. . . . this

then is light: that force which multiplies of itself and is widely diffused." Since this light as the original form of corporeality is radiated, it draws with it "created first matter, from which it cannot be separated," into ever more progressive multiplications of rays, and thus there arise bodies, the world, and the worlds.

In view of the constant attempt made by the Neo-Platonists, in connection with the metaphysics of light, to derive reality from ideality by a kind of theory of descent, it would be very easy to recall a word of Kant concerning the ignorant who bungle in metaphysics by conceiving of matter as so fine and superfine that one becomes dizzy contemplating the results, and then burst out in an exultant cry that they have fabricated a spiritual but at the same time extended being or substance. But perhaps all this is but a figment of the imagination and perhaps it would be better to think of the dynamism of Boscovich, if we should wish to take up the subject and spin it out further. In any case, Grosseteste in his metaphysics of light had advanced far beyond the mediaeval Aristotelianism and had anticipated a modern notion, namely, the attempt to measure and to define nature in terms that were in accordance with the tenets of mathematical quantitative methods instead of speaking constantly of internal essences; for it was specifically this which finally resulted from his "Optics" (*perspectiva*) inherent in the theory of light. This is eventually the reason for the importance of Oxford: long before Galileo and Descartes, it considered physics and mathematics necessary for the study of nature and refused to cling to a philosophy of nature that was based solely on speculation.

**Theory of knowledge.** In Galileo, as we shall see later on, the empirico-mathematical method was joined to the idealistic assumption that the movement of the world which we measure and count may be anchored in eternally ideal realities. Grosseteste postulated for all things an "inner rightness which can be grasped only by the mind," and this is "truth"—naturally ontological truth. This forms the true basis of all knowledge. It is precisely because this truth can be grasped only by our minds that science exists. In this we perceive that the notion of truth proposed by Anselm lives on and is developed into a theoretical apriorism which appears together with its complementary postulate: examine experience in all its phases.

**God.** The whole is crowned by or based on, as you wish, his teaching on God. God is known and is the Form of forms. Naturally not in the sense that this Form becomes essentially a complementary

part that enters into the constitution of created objects (*pars earum substantialis completiva*). Grosseteste expressed himself more clearly than did Amalric. God is the Form in the sense of an archetype, as Augustine, the Pseudo-Areopagite, and Anselm had conceived Him. In the metaphysics of light, the expression *emanation* occurs quite frequently. But of pantheism there is not the slightest trace. The substance of light was created by God. The transcendency of God remains intact. This attribute is guaranteed especially by His other attribute, eternity, by which He is thoroughly differentiated from created things which are present in time. In this Grosseteste revived the Augustinian concepts of time and eternity and subjected to sharp criticism particularly the teaching of Aristotle on eternal creation. A Platonist of the most genuine and congenial kind, he did not fail to appreciate the world of contingent things (beings) and their rights. The union of ideality and reality in this first really great figure in the history of English philosophy is truly amazing.

## 2. ROGER BACON

The heritage of Grosseteste came to fruition in his pupil, Roger Bacon (1210-1292), a philosopher of pronounced originality. He broke through the traditional framework of ideas and customs and did not spare existent conditions and customs in his penetrating criticism. Even renowned men in high places did not escape his barbed words. He called Alexander of Hales and St. Albert the Great "ignoramuses." Eventually he was placed in custody in a monastery where he remained until shortly before his death. His masterpiece, *Opus Maius*, is divided into seven parts: "On the Four Causes of Human Ignorance," "On the Relation Between Theology and Philosophy," "On the Utility of Grammar and Philology," "On the Importance of Mathematics for Physics and Theology," "On Optics," "On Experimental Science," and "On Moral Philosophy."

**Method.** Bacon busied himself chiefly with the theory of science. His namesake, Francis Bacon, was later to coin the motto which he thought expressed the task of science: Knowledge is power. The mediaeval Bacon demanded that science be made to serve practical purposes, the needs of our everyday life. Such an aim was entirely Aristotelian, an "unfree" viewpoint in the eyes of antiquity and also of the mediaeval man up to that time. Equally revolutionary was his demand that method govern science, namely, the introduction of experiment. The value of authority and deductive reasoning was

naturally affected by such an arrogant pronouncement. What enraged the tempers of his contemporaries still more was his charge that his era was guilty of certain crimes against learning: the idol of a weak and specious authority, the idol of unbroken custom, the idol of prejudices entertained by the ignorant masses, the idol of the concealment of personal ignorance, and the gaudy display of apparent wisdom. Again we are reminded of Francis Bacon and his condemnation of the four idols.

**Augustinianism.** Roger was nevertheless a follower of the old Augustinian tradition. He took over from Aristotle, who had at this time become the fashion, the phrase *intellectus agens*, but he understood it in a purely Augustinian sense: "God is the intellect, which is active in our soul in the acquisition of every kind of knowledge." His teacher before him had conceived of this in the same way. In this concept it is clearly evident that idealism is not a contradiction of experiential knowledge.

In order to appreciate even more clearly that empiricism can be found in him to an extent seldom encountered in the Middle Ages, we must mention that his mind was filled with ideas which only a modern technician could possibly entertain, namely, with dreams of autos, airplanes, and apparatus "with which man could move without danger on the bottom of the sea and on the floors of rivers."

### 3. THOMAS OF YORK

An interesting figure in the history of the school of Oxford is Thomas of York (d. 1260). He had become a *magister* there in 1253. From him we derive a metaphysics in which Aristotle, Avicenna, Averroës, Algazel, Avencebrol, and Maimonides are evaluated and which affords us a clear-cut impression of the receptiveness of the Oxonians for the influx of new ideas. Philosophy was considered in Oxford, more than elsewhere, as an independent branch of knowledge and metaphysical problems were subjected to discussions which were both objective and sane. To mention only a few: Being as such and its independence, the forms of being, principles and causes, the transcendentals.

### 4. DE INTELLIGENTIIS

The metaphysics of light which the founder of the Oxford school had advocated exercised some influence on the work *De Intelligentiis* of Adam Pulchrae Mulieris and for this reason we shall touch upon

it lightly here. This tractate has been ascribed by Baeumker to Witelo, the Silesian philosopher of nature. Characteristic of it are a Neo-Platonism of Arabian origin, Aristotelian elements, the aftereffects of the *Liber de Causis*, and the old Scholastic tradition. This work treats of God as the First Cause, of His essence, of His knowledge, of supreme intelligences, of their knowledge, and of their causality. The metaphysics contained in it does not begin with being as such but with the notion of eternity. This eternity is the One in which other things participate and thus become beings. Accordingly, the more closely a being approaches to or recedes from the One, so much more valuable or more worthless it becomes. The natural science of Oxford is not mentioned in this volume, but the metaphysics of light is. For its place in the history of philosophy, we must mention as characteristics of this work its references to Aristotle, Augustine, Avicenna, the *Liber de Causis*, Boethius, Gilbert de la Porrée. Robert Grosseteste is not noted because he was still alive. Later on we shall encounter similar thoughts in the works of St. Albert the Great.

## II. THE OLDER FRANCISCAN SCHOOL: THE MEN OF AUGUSTINIANISM

The customary Augustinian tradition predominated also in the older Franciscan school. This must not be understood, however, in the sense that only the Franciscans thought highly of St. Augustine; the earlier Dominican school and the masters of theology among the diocesan clergy had busied themselves with him even before St. Albert and St. Thomas. The Franciscans, however, were the only avowed disciples of St. Augustine. They clung most tenaciously as well as longest to a number of doctrines by which they were especially characterized and which differentiated them most sharply from the Dominicans with their Aristotelianism. These doctrines were chiefly those which pertained to the primacy of the will over the intellect, the relationship of all knowledge to the eternal *rationes* in the mind of God, the illumination generated by uncreated light, the *rationes seminales* in matter, the multiplicity of forms, spiritual matter, the relative independence of the soul in regard to the body, the identity of the potencies (faculties) of the soul, the substance of the soul, the immediate knowledge which the soul derives from its own essence, and especially the entire concept of philosophy as a Christian

philosophy. In their eyes philosophical thought was not divorced from religion and theology; rather it was intimately linked to them.

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#### 1. ALEXANDER OF HALES

The older Franciscan school was inaugurated by Alexander of Hales (c. 1170–1245), with his commentary on the *Sentences* which was brought to light by Fr. Henquinet, O.F.M., and his *Summa on the Whole of Theology*, which is also important for philosophy. Alexander knew the whole of Aristotle, not only his logic; but in his discussion of theories, he always showed a predilection for Platonic-Augustinian speculation, with which he had become acquainted when he was with the Victorines. From the Arabians he frequently quoted Avicenna. The basic thought predominant in his ideology was the notion of the *summum bonum*. He also made basic for the explanation of being the thesis: Being exists by reason of its participation in the good.

#### 2. JOHN OF LA ROCHELLE

A pupil of Alexander and his successor in the professorial chair at Paris was John of La Rochelle (c. 1200–1245). He wrote a *summa*,

*On the Soul*, which betrays very little Aristotelian but much Arabian (Avicennian), Neo-Platonic, and Augustinian influence. He paid particular attention to the theory of knowledge and taught in connection with it that we can arrive at truth about objects of experience through abstraction, as Aristotle had insisted. The truths of a higher knowledge, however, such as those of God and of the first principles, we can obtain only through divine illumination. Here God is Himself the *intellectus agens*.

### 3. ST. BONAVENTURE

The greatest of this group was unquestionably St. Bonaventure (1221-1274). Next to St. Thomas Aquinas he was the leading figure in the golden era of Scholasticism. He was professor at Paris at the same time as St. Thomas and together with him fought for the rights of the religious to occupy the professorial chairs at the University of Paris. From 1257 onward, he devoted himself entirely to the tasks assigned him both by his Order and by the Church. In 1273 he became a cardinal and presided over the Council of Lyons. After he had fulfilled this mission, he was overtaken by death. Posterity has accorded him the beloved surname, *Doctor Seraphicus*. Of his works those of special import for philosophy are *The Commentary on the Sentences*, *Quaestiones Disputatae*, *Breviloquium*, and *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*.

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**St. Bonaventure and Tradition.** In his speculation, St. Bonaventure

was emphatically conservative: "Just as in my first book I followed the Sentences and the common opinions of the masters and especially of the Master and Father of venerable memory, Brother Alexander, so also in the following books . . . for I do not propose to offer any new theories but only to evaluate further the common and accepted ones." By such an attitude he became the classical advocate of the old Augustinian tradition. This tradition we have already examined and here we will confine ourselves to its principal features as mirrored in the works of St. Bonaventure.

**God.** God is the pivotal doctrine of philosophy for St. Bonaventure, just as He was for St. Augustine. St. Thomas maintains that being is the most universal notion as well as the first notion that is known; St. Bonaventure claims, however, that God is the *primum cognitum*, that which is first known. We meet up with Him in our souls and consequently we recognize Him there, for He is present to the soul as is nothing else: *Ergo inserta est ipsi animae notitia Dei sui* ("Therefore the knowledge of God is placed in the soul itself"). It is truth which God especially permits us to find in ourselves and precisely truth in its immutability. The same holds true of the way in which we experience value, which always presupposes and reveals to us a supreme good. St. Bonaventure also accepted the proof for the existence of God which St. Anselm had advanced, as well as the aposteriori arguments which demonstrate His existence from a consideration of nature. He held most dear that *apriori* intuitive knowledge of God which he derived from the self-consciousness of the soul and its acts. The nature of God is being, life, power, truth, and the fullness of eternal ideas.

**The world.** The world also comes from God. God created being, but not through creation in eternity. The notion of an eternal creation appeared to St. Bonaventure to involve an inherent contradiction. Created being is in accordance with its nature a shadow, an imitation, and the footprint of God (exemplarism). Characteristic of created being is its composition from essence and existence, matter and form. In his terminology Bonaventure appears to have been influenced by Avicebrol, although he personally insists that it is Augustinian in origin. For every being Bonaventure assumed a multiplicity of forms. He held that there was, of course, a form which perfected every being as such; but along with this form of totality he tolerated still other inferior forms in men and generally also in the realm of life and in the inorganic kingdom. To St. Bonaventure the notion of prime matter

did not denote a complete lack of specification and sheer possibility; it included the seed powers (*rationes seminales*) which signified a certain inner causality, so that not everything that is formed out of matter should be ascribed to the operation of an additional external cause and its form. For St. Bonaventure sought the form of corporeity in light. As a consequence he availed himself of Aristotelian terminology at this point, but he understood it in the sense given it in the metaphysics of light, that sense with which we became acquainted in our consideration of Grosseteste.

**The Soul. 1) Knowledge.** In his teaching on the soul we find that he made a concession to Aristotle. Insofar as knowledge of the material world is concerned, St. Bonaventure conceded that we gain our knowledge of it by abstraction from the data of the senses. This is true, however, only at the start and so to speak only for the first beginnings of knowledge; for when there is a question of understanding genuine truths—and this at least in connection with the metaphysics of God and of the soul—and also of understanding pure truths in natural phenomena, the mind must be brought into contact with the eternal ideas. "Things have a threefold being, namely: being in the knowing mind, being in its own proper reality, and being in the divine mind. Consequently neither the truth of things in themselves, nor their truth in actual reality are sufficient for our souls to obtain positive knowledge, because both these kinds of truth are mutable; rather our soul must approach these things in some fashion or other according to their being in divine knowledge" (*De Scientia Christi*, q. 4; concl.; *Opera Omnia*, V, p. 23, ed. Quaracchi). We can readily see the relationship of this theory to the Augustinian doctrine of illumination. It is not clear, however, whether he held for a functional influence on the act of knowing by God or whether he wished merely to say that every positive truth is evident in its necessary content of truth by reason of an intuition of its essence through a kind of analysis. Be that as it may, truth for St. Bonaventure rests upon *apriori* reasons, for sensible reality is only the beginning. This is required also by his exemplarism. The true world for St. Bonaventure, as it was for St. Augustine and Plato before him, was the world of eternal prototypes.

**2) Faculties of the soul.** In regard to the question dealing with the relation of the faculties of the soul to its substance, St. Bonaventure showed himself cautious. He did not accept the real distinction of the Thomists nor did he express himself entirely in favor of a formal

identity; rather he sees in the faculties something similar to integrating constituents.

3) *Soul and body.* In connection with the problem touching on the relation of the soul to the body, St. Bonaventure gravitated in the direction of a greater autonomy and a greater independence of the soul. He did not accept the doctrine of the substantial union which St. Thomas advanced; the body has its own distinct form (light). Men exhibit, in addition, a wide variety of forms, and the soul itself is composed of matter and form. The soul, in contrast to the body, manifests itself as a determinant which forms all things totally and completely.

### III. ST. ALBERT THE GREAT, THE UNIVERSAL DOCTOR

With St. Albert the Great the Dominican Order, which had fostered so conspicuously the intellectual life of the Middle Ages, steps into the limelight. With him the great movement that was stirring awakens to full life, namely, Aristotelianism. Boethius had planned to present his generation with both the whole of Plato and the whole of Aristotle, but he did not realize his ambition. When in 1231 Pope Gregory IX commissioned several scholars, among them William of Auxerre, to study the possibility of employing Aristotle and his philosophy for the science of faith, his hopes never advanced beyond the stage of an ambitious attempt. St. Albert for his part proposed "to make understandable for the Latins all parts of Aristotle's philosophy." This time success crowned the undertaking. Not only the logic but also the physics, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and politics of the Stagirite were added to the heritage of Scholasticism. Along with these, certain ideas were drawn from Arabian and Jewish science and philosophy and also from many other, especially Neo-Platonic, sources. St. Albert bears the title *doctor universalis*, and he is in fact a universal encyclopedist on a grand scale. Through his labors he performed a priceless service for Scholasticism. Sixty years after his death an anonymous chronicler wrote: "At this time there blossomed forth Bishop Albert, of the Dominican Order, the distinguished theologian and the most learned of all the Masters, to whom no one can be compared in the whole of history since the time of Solomon . . . but because of his German ancestry, he is for that

reason hated by many, and his fame is decried, although his works are everywhere in demand."

## LIFE

St. Albert was born in Lauingen, in Swabia, around 1193, perhaps of the noble family of the Duke of Bollstädt. He studied in Padua, joined the Dominican Order at the age of thirty, became a lecturer at Hildesheim in 1233, and later at Freiburg, Ratisbon, Strasbourg, and Cologne. Between 1245-1248 we run across him as *magister in sacra pagina* at the University of Paris. There St. Thomas was in all probability his pupil. Surely he was St. Thomas' teacher at Cologne from 1248-1252, because it was to that city he repaired after his sojourn in Paris. In 1254 he became a provincial of the German Dominicans. Two years later we find him at the Papal court at Anagni, two years later at Florence. In 1271 at the General Chapter in Valenciennes, along with Peter of Tarantasia and others, he worked out a new order of studies. He became Bishop of Ratisbon (Regensburg) in 1261. After he had put in order the tangled affairs of that see, he resigned his episcopal office and lived only to preach a crusade. We hear of him again at Cologne, Strasbourg, the Council of Lyons in 1274, and again at Paris in 1277. He died at Cologne on November 15, 1290. If we bear in mind that St. Albert made all these journeys on foot at the behest of his Order and of the Church, we are caused to wonder how it was possible for him, in the midst of all his traveling, to devote so much time and so much concentration to write the many works he actually did. These works in the edition of Borgnet (1890 ff.) fill thirty-eight quarto volumes. "*Nostri temporis stupor et miraculum*," he was named by his pupil, Ulrich of Strasbourg.

## WORKS

*Paraphrases* of the works of Aristotle under the same titles as the original, hence paraphrases of the works of the Stagirite on physics, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, politics, and the writings on the natural sciences. Unpublished is a commentary on ethics in the form of *Quaestiones* (c. 1250, edited and revised by St. Thomas). A commentary on the *Sentences* (c. 1245). *Summa de Creatures* (c. 1245). A *Summa Theologica* (after 1270) — unfinished. Commentaries

on the *Liber de Causis* and on the writings of the Pseudo-Areopagite. Many unpublished manuscripts, among others his writings on the *Elements* of Euclid, on the *Optics* of Almagest, and on his early work, *Tractatus de Natura Boni*.

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### 1. THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

The work of St. Albert the Great, taken both as a whole and in its individual parts, has been examined by many competent scholars. The very richness of its content sometimes causes its unity to suffer. Many discrepancies would disappear, however, if the scholars who studied him succeeded in differentiating between that which he merely quotes from other sources and that which represents his own personal thought. In his philosophical *summa* (*De Creaturis*) in any case, when he speaks his own mind, his speculation is well balanced. We cannot call him simply an Aristotelian or simply a Neo-Platonist. He sought to fuse together the speculation of both Aristotle and Plato: *Et scias quod non perficitur homo in philosophia nisi ex scientia duarum philosophiarum Aristotelis et Platonis* ("Know well that a man is not perfected in philosophy except by a knowledge of the two philosophers, Aristotle and Plato") (*Met.*, 1. I, tr. 5, c. 15).

If we should examine more closely the Aristotelianism of St. Albert, we would of necessity be forced to clarify the meaning of Aristotelian terminology not only in his works but also in those of St. Thomas and together with him of Scholasticism itself. When in Scholastic works Aristotle and his concepts are mentioned, we must always ask ourselves, what kind of an Aristotle is meant and in what

context must his terms be understood. Of the philosophical thoughts of St. Albert we will offer three of the more striking: his notions on the foundation of being, the problem of the universals, and the substantiality of the soul.

## 2. THE FOUNDATION OF BEING

St. Albert developed the foundation of being much in the same manner as we have seen it done in the metaphysics of light advocated by Robert Grosseteste. God is uncreated Light and, as the *intellectus universaliter agens*, begets the first intelligence. From it, being emanates over the cosmic soul in various degrees until it reaches corporeal being—all this conceived after the fashion of the *Liber de Causis* and Avicenna. St. Albert, however, rejected the Neo-Platonic monism of the Arabian philosophers. The being of the first intelligence is no longer God Himself but something distinct, perhaps “obscure light.” *Quidam dixerunt, omnia esse unum et quod diffusio primi in omnibus est esse eorum* (“Some have said that all things are one and that the diffusion of the first into all is their being”), he reports, placing himself at variance with this opinion.

## 3. UNIVERSALS

In the problem of universals St. Albert offered a solution which anticipates the answer which St. Thomas is to propose. St. Albert acknowledged the division of a universal into *ante rem*, *in re*, and *post rem*. In line with such a distinction he unravels it still further: the specific essence of things is independent of its realization in the space-time world and precedes it. Our universal concepts, under the form of universality, are *entia rationis* (beings of reason) and therefore *post rem*, or consequent to reality. The particular is an actualization of the specific essence, and thus we have a universal *in re*. In this solution we have in a nutshell the Scholastic synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism, the idea and the world of concrete reality. We can see here, furthermore, how in metaphysics the Scholastics must always Platonize, for even St. Thomas at this point did not abandon the doctrine of ideas.

## 4. THE SUBSTANTIALITY OF THE SOUL

We meet up with this same synthesis again in his teaching on the substance of the soul. All created substances are composed of essence and existence. From this it might appear as if St. Albert had assumed

a real distinction as Avicenna had; but then again it might also appear as if he had conceived only of a distinction of reason, a notional difference, as had Averroës. Corporeal substances owe their being to the energy of the sunlight joined to the activity of the first intelligence. To express this theory, the concepts of matter and form are employed but not in the genuine Aristotelian sense; for light is the form of corporeity. In spiritual substances St. Albert would not accept either a composition of matter and form or one of essence and existence. But a finite substance must nevertheless be composed, and so he took refuge in the distinction which had been employed by Boethius, namely, *quo est* (that whereby a thing is) and *quod est* (that which a thing is). Since the latter can be predicated of the soul, he showed that the soul is something concrete and is consequently a particular substance. Since the former, the specific quiddity, is also found in it, we may also speak of a universal form of the soul. St. Albert could not make up his mind whether or not the soul, absolutely speaking, could be called the entelechy of the body. As did Nemesius with whom he agrees, he feared that by so doing he would tamper with its substantiality (cf. above, p. 307). Only insofar as the soul gives life to the body is it the form of the body; "in itself, however, it is, as Plato said, an immaterial spirit and always life" (*Summa theol.*, II, tr. 12, q. 69, m. 2, a. 2 ad 1). As a consequence he was inclined, as Plato had been, to conceive of the soul as a pilot. By such a conception he could preserve its autonomy intact. This reminds us that Aristotle himself made use of the same figure of speech in the eighth book of his *Physics*. Because he defended the substantiality of the soul, St. Albert turned against Averroës. Each soul, he held in opposition to him, has its own active and its own passive intellect (*De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroëm*).

## 5. THE NATURAL SCIENTIST

By what we have already written we do not wish to create the impression that St. Albert devoted himself exclusively to speculative philosophy. In regard to philosophy he knew or had an acquaintance with tradition in its entirety and was able to speak authoritatively in matters of speculation. In addition, he had a predilection for direct observation and the direct description of nature. We would not exaggerate if we should call him both a zoologist and a botanist. The direct observation of nature (the so-called *experimentum*) he fostered and cultivated in every possible way. The editor of his works,

H. J. Stadler, wrote in the *Baeumker-Beiträge* (Nos. 16 and 17): "If the development of the natural sciences had adopted the course mapped out by St. Albert, it would have saved itself a detour of some three hundred years" (cf. H. Balss, *Albertus Magnus als Biologe*, 1947).

#### 6. ST. ALBERT AND MYSTICISM

In conclusion, we must at least mention the importance of St. St. Albert for German mysticism. This legacy of his, drawn partly from the Patristic age, partly from the writings of the Pseudo-Areopagite, partly from the Neo-Platonic intellectual heritage, based on Arabian philosophy, bore much fruit. Eckhart especially and then Tauler, Seuse, John of Tambach, and Nicholas of Cusa drew upon him for their inspiration.

#### 7. THE SCHOOL OF ST. ALBERT

To this school belong Hugo Ripelin of Strasbourg, Ulrich of Strasbourg, Dietrich of Freiberg (d. 1310), and Berthold of Mosburg. According to Grabmann, there were manifested in this group an inclination for Neo-Platonism, a preference for the problems of the natural sciences, independence of speculation, and that universality of intellectual outlook which was so characteristic of its Master.

## CHAPTER 19

### ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—I: EPISTEMOLOGY AND GENERAL METAPHYSICS

Writers have given St. Thomas Aquinas the title “prince of Scholasticism.” This makes good sense, for he is its true founder. Whatever novelties had been assimilated into Scholasticism in the age before him, especially the ideas of Aristotle by way of the Arabians or through direct translations from the Greeks, he brought together and developed into a uniform structure. This synthesis which he so artistically wove out of the old and the new is strongly knit together in every detail; it is especially outstanding by reason of its clarity. Concerning the place that must be accorded to St. Thomas within the framework of Scholasticism, E. Gilson has penned the following lines: “It is not originality, but the boldness and the compactness of structure which distinguish Thomas from the rest of the Scholastics. In regard to universality, he was surpassed by Albert; in regard to ardor and spiritual profundity, he was outdone by St. Bonaventure; in regard to logical subtlety he was outdistanced by Scotus—St. Thomas excelled them all in the art of didactic style and as master and classicist of a synthesis of luminous clarity.”

#### LIFE

Thomas Aquinas was born of a noble family at Rocca Secca in the environs of Naples at the end of 1224. When he was five years of age, he was sent to the monastery of Monte Cassino. At fourteen he went to Naples to study. In the quadrivium his teacher was Peter of Ireland, who had himself written commentaries on Aristotle. To him Thomas owed his first introduction to the Greek philosopher. When twenty he entered the Dominican Order, and a year later was sent to Paris to continue his studies. From 1248–1252 he was in Cologne, where he attended the lectures of the renowned master, Albert the

Great. In 1256 he earned the degree of *magister* at the University of Paris, along with St. Bonaventure. After devoting three years to teaching as *magister*, he returned again to Italy and lectured as *lector curiae* in the presence of Pope Urban IV in Orvieto, at the Order's house of studies at St. Sabina (Rome), and again in the presence of Clement IV at Viterbo. At the Papal court he became acquainted with William of Moerbeke, who put into his hands reliable translations of Aristotle—the same Moerbeke who translated the works of Proclus, Archimedes, the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Ammonius, John Philoponus, and Simplicius. All this was of tremendous importance for St. Thomas and the development of his philosophy.

From 1269–1272 St. Thomas went a second time to Paris. In these years he reached the zenith of his academic life. These years were, however, filled with bothersome contentions with the professors from among the diocesan clergy who again raised their voices against the Orders carrying on teaching activity at the university, as they had on the occasion of his first term in Paris. There also were disputes against the Latin Averroists or rather against the radical Aristotelianism of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. He was also compelled to quell the opposition of the Franciscan school, especially of John Peckham. Because of the ecclesiastical condemnation of Latin Averroism, St. Thomas had fallen into disrepute. At times he was opposed by members of his own Order, for they could not distinguish between his and Siger's Aristotelianism. He defended his position with such calmness and realism that he forced his opponents to consider his views with respect.

After 1272 St. Thomas returned again to Italy and devoted his labors to the revision of the course of studies followed in his own Order and to teaching at the University of Naples. He was summoned by Gregory X to take part in the Council of Lyons, but he died on his way there at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova on March 7, 1274.

### Writings:

#### *Commentaries:*

On the works of Aristotle (between 1261–1272) — *In Perihermeneias*; *In Postiores Analyticorum*; *In VIII Libros Physicorum*; *In III Primos Libros De Coelo et Mundo*; *In III Libros De Generatione et Corruptione*; *In IV Libros Meteorum*; *In Librum De Anima*; *In II et III De Anima*;

*In Librum De Sensu et Sensato; In Librum De Memoria et Reminiscentia; In XII Libros Metaphysicorum; In X Libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum; In IV Libros Politicorum.*

*Interpretation of Neo-Platonism:*

*In Librum de Causis* (after 1268); *In Dionysium De Divinis Nominibus* (before 1268); *In librum Boethii De Trinitate* (1257–1258); *In librum Boethii De Hebdomadibus* (Tractate on the Axioms).

*Opuscula or Smaller Philosophical Treatises:*

*De Ente et Essentia* (1254–1256); *De Aeternitate Mundi* (1270); *De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas* (1270); and others.

*Theological Works Having Philosophical Relevance:*

*Commentarium in IV Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (1254–1256); *Compendium Theologiae* (1260–1266); *Summa Theologiae* (Parts I and II, 1266–1272; Part III, 1272–1273; the work remains incomplete).

*Quaestiones Disputatae:*

*De Veritate* (1256–1259); *De Potentia* (1256–1266); *De Anima* (1266); *De Malo* (1269); and others.

*Apologetical Works:*

*Summa Contra Gentiles*, also called *Summa Philosophica* (1259–1264); *Contra errores Graecorum* (1265); and others.

*Writings on Practical Philosophy:*

*De Reginime Principum* (genuine up to II, 4); *De Reginime Iudeorum ad Ducissam Brabantiae*; and others.

(On the subject of the authentic works of St. Thomas and the date of their composition, see V. J. Bourke, *A Thomistic Bibliography* [St. Louis: St. Louis University Press, 1945]).

**Editions:**

*Opera Omnia*, Romae, 1882 ff., 16 vols. to 1956 (Leonine edition, best edition to date).—*Opera Omnia*, Paris, 1871–1880, 34 vols. (Vivès edition).—*Opera Omnia*, Parmae, 1862–1870, 25 vols. (Piana edition).—Separate editions: *Summa contra Gentiles* (Torino-Roma: Marietti, 1934; text of the Leonine edition).—*Summa Theologiae*, 4 vols. (Taurini: Marietti, 1948; text of the Leonine edition).—*Summa Theologica*, 5 vols. (Ottawa: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1941 ff.; text of the Piana edition).—*Quaestiones Disputatae*, 2 vols. (Taurini: Marietti, 1949).—*Quaestiones Quodilibetales* (Taurini: Marietti, 1949).—*In XII libros Metaphysicorum* (Taurini: Marietti, 1950).—*In Aristotelis libros De Sensu et Sensato, De Memoria et Reminiscentia . . .* (Taurini: Marietti, 1949).—*In Aristotelis librum De Anima* (3rd ed., Taurini: Marietti, 1948).—*In X Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nichomachum Expositio* (Taurini: Marietti, 1949).—*In Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio* (Taurini: Marietti, 1951).—*In de Coelo et Mundo, De Genera-*

*tione et Corruptione, Meteorologicorum Expositio* (Taurini: Marietti, 1952). — *In octo libros De Physico Auditu sive Physicorum Aristotelis Commentaria* (Taurini: Marietti, 1953). — *In Librum Boethii de Trinitate*, edited with notes by P. Wyser (Fribourg and Louvain: Société Philosophique, Editions E. Nauwelaerts, 1948). — *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, edited with notes by H. D. Saffrey (Fribourg and Louvain: Société Philosophique, Editions E. Nauwelaerts, 1954). — *Opuscula philosophica et theologica*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1927).

### English Translations:

*The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas*, literally translated by the Dominican Fathers of the English Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911–1923, 20 vols.; new edition, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947, 3 vols.). — *The Summa Contra Gentiles of St. Thomas*, literally translated by the Dominican Fathers of the English Province, 4 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1923). — *Of God and His Creatures* (an abridged version of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*), translated by Joseph Rickaby (Westminster, Md.: The Carroll Press, 1950). — *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, edited, annotated, with an Introduction by A. C. Pegis, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1944); abridgment of same, *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: The Modern Library, 1948). — *St. Thomas Aquinas: On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God*, newly translated, with an introduction and notes by A. C. Pegis (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., Image Books, 1955). — *St. Thomas Aquinas: On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Two: Creation*, newly translated, with an introduction and notes by J. F. Anderson (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., Image Books, 1955). — *St. Thomas Aquinas: On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Three: Providence*, newly translated with an Introduction and notes by Vernon J. Bourke (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., Image Books, 1956). — *St. Thomas Aquinas: On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Four: Salvation*, newly translated with an introduction and notes by Charles J. O'Neil (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., Image Books, 1957). — *On Being and Essence*, translated by A. Maurer (Toronto: Mediaeval Institute, 1949). — *Compendium of Theology*, translated by C. Vollert (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1947). — *The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect*, translated by R. E. Brennan (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1946). — *Truth*, translated by R. Mulligan *et al.*, 3 vols. (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1952–1954). — *On the Power of God*, translated by L. Shapcote (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952). — *The Soul*, translated by J. P. Rowan (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1949). — *The Philosophy of Teaching*,

translated by M. H. Mayer (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1929). — *Selected Political Writings*, by A. P. d'Entreves and J. G. Dawson (London: Blackwell, 1948). — *An Introduction to the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, texts selected and translated by J. F. Anderson (Chicago: Regnery, 1953). — *St. Thomas Aquinas: Selected Philosophical Writings*, selected and translated by Thomas Gilby (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

### Studies:

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## KNOWLEDGE

## 1. THE NATURAL LIGHT

The influence of Aristotle upon St. Thomas is first noticed in the new evaluation placed on natural knowledge in contrast to faith. Knowledge is not only appraised as an auxiliary of theology, but it is also considered as something autonomous and possessing its own rights. By nature every human being desires to know, Aristotle had said, and St. Thomas made this thesis his very own. Just as the state exists "by nature" and does not first receive its rights from the Church, so for him also philosophy. It is significant that St. Thomas not only in the introduction to his philosophy but also to his theology deemed it necessary to stress that in addition to a natural light of reason there can also be supernatural light—revelation (*S. T.*, I, 1, 1). In the centuries before him the opposite had been held to be true: scholars had to justify their insistence on reason, *ratio*. The enthusiasm of Aquinas for knowledge and science is unexcelled. De Wulf once wrote that St. Albert succeeded in instilling into his time a desire to know all things, a desire by which he himself was animated. In this spirit St. Thomas felt that the task of the natural sciences should be such that "they should inscribe into the souls of men the order of the universe as well as its reasons and its causes." But St. Thomas would not have been a man of the Middle Ages, if, despite faith and the science of faith, he had not reserved for himself the right to trace out a universal ideological framework into which all philosophical knowledge could be fitted. "Whatsoever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this science [theology], must be condemned as false" (*S. T.*, I, 1, 6 ad 2; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 4).

## 2. SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

**Against St. Augustine and in favor of Aristotle.** In the problem dealing with the origin of knowledge, St. Thomas also followed Aristotle. Up to that time St. Augustine had found almost universal acceptance in regard to this subject. St. Thomas frequently took exception to his teaching that we know all things in their divine exemplars (see *S. T.*, I, 84, 5; 88, 3; *De Veritate*, VIII, 7). It is true that St. Thomas appropriated for himself the expression *illumination* but in using it he modified its meaning by a cautious adjective, "certain" illumination, or by the trenchant remark that the natural light

of reason is "a certain participation in the divine light." He gave the Augustinian notion of illumination a new meaning by interpreting it as representative of the universal *concurrus divinus*, so that it no longer denoted any kind of special concurrence (S. C. G., I, 11).

He admitted and conceded all this in order to embark upon an entirely different course, namely, the explanation that Aristotle had advocated. In union with him he asserted: "It is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates from sense" (S. T., I, 1, 9; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 6). The proposition that God is the first object known, as this was assumed in the teaching that knowledge proceeds from the divine exemplars, is expressly rejected: "The first object of our knowledge in this life is the quiddity of a material thing, which is the proper object of our intellect" (S. T., I, 88, 3). In a certain sense it is true that we know all things in the divine light, just as it is true that we know all things through the light of the sun. Just as we know but little about the world when we peer directly and intently into the sun and neglect to look at natural objects, just so little knowledge do we possess when we share only in the eternal ideas as the Platonists had believed. We need, consequently, sense knowledge, sense data, if we wish to acquire true knowledge (see S. T., I, 84, 5). Consult: M. Grabmann, *Die theologische Erkenntnis- und Einleitungslehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin auf Grund seiner Schrift, "In Boëthium de Trinitate"* (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1948), pp. 45-95.

**Degrees of abstraction.** St. Thomas recognized three stages in the origin of all our knowledge. First of all, we experience in sense perception the concrete material world in its individual extension: this flesh, these bones. This is the world of natural philosophy to which psychology belongs. This branch of philosophy has for its special object *ens mobile*, being that is subject to motion. By pre-scinding from individual determinations or differences and by concentrating on extension in general, purely in accordance with its quantitative relations, there emerges before our intellectual eye the world of mathematical science. Its object is *ens quantum* or being insofar as it is quantitatively extended. By abstracting again and by leaving out of consideration the whole of extension, thinking now only of purely ideal determination (differentiation), there arises before our eyes the realm of metaphysical science. Its object is being as being and its most universal determinations, e.g., unity, act, potency (see S. T., I, 85, 1).

**Principles.** In this fashion we uncover the origin of the supreme principles not only of knowledge in general (laws of logic), but also of the universal *raisons d'être* of the individual sciences. The most universal principles of all knowledge become evident directly, intuitively, by means of an understanding of the notion of being. They are the *judicia per se nota*. The concept of being is not only the most universal but it is also the first known. "That which first falls under apprehension is being, the understanding of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Therefore the first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time, which is based on the notion of being and non-being, as Aristotle stated. Now as being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension absolutely, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action" (S. T., I-II, 94, 2). The principles of the particular sciences are posited by the fact that the correlative notions of genus and species (e.g., extension, bodies, life, plants, animals, soul) which result from the process of abstraction out of experiences are laid down as bases.

**Reasons for the *aposteriori*.** St. Thomas also puzzled over the reasons. He asked why it is that human knowledge is possible only by having recourse to the phantasms derived from sense knowledge (*convertendo se ad phantasmata*). Once and for all we must be convinced that, if certain sense organs are lacking, the knowledge which would result from them is also wanting. Over and over again we experience by way of introspection how we employ perceptual images or figures of speech or similes to make a purely spiritual subject clear to our listeners. The reason behind these phenomena is to be found in the fact that our cognitive powers are always adapted or suited to the objects of knowledge: "The proper object of the human intellect, which is united to a body, is a quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter; and through such natures of visible things it rises to a certain knowledge of things invisible" (S. T., I, 84, 7; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 429). We contemplate the nature of a stone as it exists in the individual stone; the nature of a horse as it exists in the individual horse. Our reasoning always contemplates the universal in the particular object or being. The particular object, however, can be grasped only by means of sense knowledge. Therefore we need sense experience. St. Thomas asked those idealists who sought to derive all knowledge from the intellect why they were unable,

solely on the basis of their intuition of ideas, to say *apriori* how many genera of living beings there might be and what their origins might be. All such data must be sought and can be found only in space and time (*S. T.*, I, 84, 5).

**The *apriori* according to St. Thomas.** The above explanation might appear to be empiricism, but it is not. To the question, whether intellectual knowledge is derived from sensible things he answered: "it cannot be said that sensible knowledge is the total and perfect cause of intellectual knowledge, but rather that it is in a way the material cause," for it supplies the material of our knowledge (*S. T.*, I, 84, 6; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 428). For this reason, "it is not strange that intellectual knowledge should extend further than sensible knowledge" (*S. T.*, I, 84, 6, ad 3; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 429). We advance beyond sense knowledge. By his explanation empiricism is absolutely excluded.

Therefore we can pose the following question: In what sense do we transcend experience and by what right? The step beyond is made by the "active or agent intellect." This reason, or intellect, is the proper efficient cause of our knowledge, our intellectual knowledge. What the intellect derives from the phantasms of sensible experience are genuine universals, universally valid and necessary knowledge. St. Thomas did not doubt this for a moment. It never entered his mind to question, as do the modern sceptics, whether or not the representations of the universals, which we abstract from sensible experience, are perhaps valid only so far as the basis of experience on which they rest actually extends, so that no one knows certainly what tomorrow will be like, just as no one knows whether it had always been like that.

Scholars have, as a consequence, rightly construed his *intellectus agens* only as the *apriori* starting point of his theory of knowledge. This was true for St. Thomas as it will be later for Kant. He too will say: "Even if all our knowledge begins with experience, not all of it comes directly from experience." St. Thomas' *apriori*, however, is of a different kind. His is not a functional *apriori*, which must first of all assume or posit objects; on the contrary, it rests firmly on the metaphysical conviction that objects are already in existence, that they do possess intrinsic truth, that they do have their form and idea, their "eternal exemplars," and that these are mirrored in our souls as the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 16, 6) expressly states. Only because the *intellectus agens* itself is a principle inherent in the mind,

which participates in the divine light—the one eternal truth which contains within itself all truths and natures—can it actualize the eternal forms latent in material things. Moreover, this agent intellect is proper to each individual man (*S. T.*, I, 79, 4). For this reason abstraction for St. Thomas is not abstraction in the modern sense but intuition of the essence, or as Garrigou-Lagrange terms it, a sort of “abstractive intuition,” as it was also for Aristotle. And in this metaphysical assumption we can appreciate St. Thomas’ justification for his thesis. It would not be contrary to this view to hold, as he did, that we do not contemplate essences and natures intuitively and so to say *prima vista*, but only by means of and through the accidents.

**St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure.** This proves that St. Thomas turns to St. Augustine from time to time for inspiration. Not only did St. Thomas refuse to pursue the line of thought that Abelard had developed because of his earlier doubts about metaphysical knowledge; he actually put an end to its development. We may justly ask whether the difference between his theory of knowledge and that of St. Bonaventure is an essential one. Looked at from a psychological viewpoint there is a difference. According to St. Bonaventure, the “eternal exemplars” stand at the beginning of the genesis of knowledge; according to St. Thomas, at the end. Considered from the standpoint of logic, there is no difference, because the “truth” which we apprehend, according to both philosophers, does not have its basis in experience as such—in both cases experience is only the material cause—but in the essential relations which are posited by the eternal forms which are disclosed to us.

**Judgment and truth of the judgment.** 1) *Essence of the judgment.* For St. Thomas knowledge is perfected—and on this point he again follows Aristotle—not by a perception of the essence but by the judgment. A judgment is either a composition or a division of concepts (*intellectus componens vel dividens*). If it combines or separates the essential notions as the facts really show them to be combined or separated, the judgment is true. And as this truth is one of the properties of the judgment, we would possess truth in the true sense of the word (*S. T.*, I, 16, 1 and 2). “Truth is had when one affirms ‘that to be which is, and that not to be which is not’” (*De Ver.*, I, 1; translation of R. W. Mulligan in *Truth*, Vol. I, p. 7 [Chicago: Regnery, 1952]). More briefly, “Truth is the equation of thought and thing”—*Veritas est adequatio intellectus cum re* (*S. T.*, I, 16, 1; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 90).

2) *Truth of the judgment and ontological truth.* In spite of this, St. Thomas also assumes the truth of sense perceptions as well as the truth of the definitive quiddity and of essential notions. In fact, he is of the opinion that sense data and essences are always true (*circa quod quid est intellectus non decipitur*, "the intellect is never deceived about the essence of a thing"), because both the senses and the mind are informed directly by the objects themselves (S. T., I, 17, 3). In such a process the essences themselves determine whether or not the copulative of the judgment will be one of possibility or impossibility, for the judgment rests upon the reproduction of reality which is contained in the sensible apperception and intellectual perception of an object. This means, however, that the intrinsic or ontological truth of things is decisive for the judgment; for "it is clear, that, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, natural things from which our intellect gets its scientific knowledge measure our intellect. Yet these things are themselves measured by the divine intellect, in which are all created things, just as all works of art find their origin in the intellect of the artist. The divine intellect, therefore, measures and is not measured; a natural thing both measures and is measured; but our intellect is measured and measures only artifacts, not natural things" (*De Ver.*, I, 2; translation of R. W. Mulligan in *Truth*, Vol. I, p. 11).

3) *Synthetic apriori judgments.* For this reason the problem of synthetic apriori judgments does not exist for St. Thomas; with them, however, Kant begins his theory of knowledge. St. Thomas had not reached that fatal position where he would be forced to bring into a unity the various data of experience without knowing the rules according to which it should be done. To him things are still united and combined; there are essences and natures, and we know about them; the agent intellect makes them appear as something eternal, already completed and of value. Behind St. Thomas' theory of sense perception and of natures we can still detect the ancient view which saw reality and ideas as intrinsically one—a view in which the world and the objects in it are available for sensible and intellectual examination and study in their inner nature, be the latter by intuition or by the *Nous* or by the eternal exemplar or by the agent (active) intellect. In conclusion, to St. Thomas all knowledge is a contemplation or  $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\epsilon\iota\pi$  and the royal road is dialectics. H. Meyer is right when he says that the theory in which our knowledge is perfected in judgments does not fit perfectly into the Aristotelian and Scholastic

system, insofar as "in Aristotle the intuitive power of the agent intellect manifests a certain likeness to God and insofar as God according to St. Thomas does not combine or divide, but simply knows" (*Thomas von Aquin*, p. 393).

## B E I N G

The distinctive speculation of Aquinas is made clear to us in his metaphysics. In this subject particularly we notice an especially strong influence of Aristotelian terminology, a frequent incidence of Aristotelian problems, and viewpoints fundamental to his philosophy. In addition we can detect the presence of Augustinian and Neo-Platonic ideas. As a result it would be wrong for us to hope to find a purely Aristotelian metaphysics in St. Thomas.

### 1. REALITY

**Its priority over the human mind.** Preparatory and frankly assumed as a matter of course is the notion of reality which is always united with the notion of being. Being is always something real. In such a conception of reality two points are peculiarly characteristic: its existence is independent of the human mind and a primary approximation to time-space reality. An ancient as well as a mediaeval concept is that being is not created by the intellect but is discovered by it.

On this point, an especially informative article is the one in which St. Thomas asks whether the whole world of objects which man sees and of which he thinks may be only subjective, the product of intuition or of the reasoning of his own intellect, or a thing only of his own personal fabrication. "Some have asserted that our intellectual faculties know only the impressions made on them; as, for example, that sense is cognizant only of the impression made on its organ. According to this theory, the intellect understands only its own impression, namely, the intelligible species it has received, so that this species is what is understood" (*S. T.*, I, 85, 2; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 433).

Consequently the object and the content of our intellectual knowledge is only a subjective determination of the intellect. Here we can ask a very modern question—one that has been debated since the time of Kant—namely, whether being has existence only in our consciousness, because the object of our knowledge is, after all,

only a determination of our intellect. We must listen to the answer that St. Thomas gave to this question: There would no longer be any science, because "it would follow that every science would be concerned not with objects outside the soul, but only with intelligible species within the soul" (*S. T.*, I, 85, 2; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 433). As a result, the distinction between true and false would be immediately destroyed. As a consequence we immediately grasp St. Thomas' assumption: Under all circumstances a being must be trans-subjective, i.e., above and beyond the subject; it must be present to us as something already existent. In this consist both the reality and the objectivity of being, and in this truth also lies. Objects determine or measure our intellect. That we might be able to measure objects, perhaps according to the transcendental laws of the intellect, is an opinion that will be advanced only in the still distant future.

**Space and time reality.** We further recognize the originality of the Thomistic concept of reality in the fact that the concrete particular being—that which exists in time and in place, the first substance—represents being in its proper and original meaning. In an entire tractate, *De ente et essentia*, he explained with great clarity that essence is neither solely form nor solely idea, but is first substance composed of matter and form (cap. 2). For St. Thomas the object of human knowledge is a quiddity which exists in matter in a particular, individual actualization (see *S. T.*, I, 84, 7). This is genuine and real being. Aristotle, in contrast to Plato, had also recognized this same thing as reality. Through the influence of the Stoic as well as through the Christian doctrine of creation, this concept of reality became more firmly entrenched.

**Metaphysical reality.** When St. Thomas, however, defines the formal object of metaphysics, he speaks of a transphysical world of *insensibilia* (the Neo-Scholastics express the same notion by the term *ens intelligibile*), of universal natures and essences, of forms and ideas, in which God had sketched both being and beings, in which being was created and actually exists, imitates God and so participates in Him. For this reason metaphysics is also theology (*In Boethii De Trinitate*, 5, 1; *S. T.*, I, 15, 2). Accordingly, as metaphysics is the science of the being of an existent thing, it is evident that in this connection St. Thomas entertained another concept of reality, the Platonic-Augustinian notion of "genuine" reality. We need only compare this reality with the reality of modern vitalist philosophy—for example, with Klages, to whom reality is precisely the a-rational

in contradistinction to the intellectual world of objects — in order to see how the concept of reality in St. Thomas is again viewed from the standpoint of the idea and is essentially determined by it. Metaphysics as a science of being is basically a science of *insensibilia*.

## 2. PROPERTIES OF BEING

Aristotle had studied being as such and all its properties in his metaphysics. For St. Thomas this task is also the most important of his work. Among the states or properties of being we may enumerate its analogical nature, its transcendental determinations, its arrangement into various categories, and its hierachial degrees or grades of value.

**Analogy.** 1) *St. Thomas' concept of analogy.* The analogy of being is stressed again and again by St. Thomas in conformity with Aristotle and in his own words and with his own examples. Being is not a generic notion which can be differentiated in such a way as to become something else by a new note that forms a species, for everything that is added to being must itself also be being. As a result, being is not predicated in the same conceptual meaning (i.e., univocally) of different objects. But it is not predicated in such a way that only the word is the same, and what is meant by it something entirely different (i.e., equivocally). Being is predicated in such a manner that a certain similarity is recognized and expressed. And in this we find that analogy consists. This doctrine of analogy takes a middle road by recognizing besides that which is identical also that which is different, and besides that which is different that which is identical. In this way it avoids the two extreme views, one of which looks upon all things as simply identical (monism), while the other considers all things as perfectly incommensurable (irrational agnosticism).

There are two kinds of analogy. In one type, several things bear a resemblance or are proportioned to one definite thing, e.g., the notion "health" which we use when we speak of a healthy human being, a healthy food, a healthy medicine, a healthy color; these are related to health and can be understood only in reference to it. In the other type of analogy, a second thing is proportioned or bears a resemblance to a first thing upon which it depends; thus, for example, an accident has a relation to a substance and from it receives both being and meaning (S. C. G., I, 34; S. T., I, 13, 5).

2) *Tendencies.* The purposes which St. Thomas pursued in his

doctrine of analogy are thus brought into focus: Being should not be confused with a "one and all," a  $\&\nu\ kai\ \pi\alpha\nu$ ; nor should it, by reason of a complete uniqueness and a paradoxical position, be withdrawn from all comparisons. Analogy is of extreme importance especially in reasoning about God. Analogy makes it possible for us to relate God to the world and thus avoid stressing our inability to know Him, without identifying Him with the world in a pantheistic fashion, by which one would in fact nullify or annihilate God.

3) *Origin.* The logical and epistemological background of St. Thomas' idea of analogy is based on the concept of imitation and of participation (see *Commentarium in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, I, 35, 1, 4 and *De Potentia*, 7, 7). By it we are brought face to face with a Platonic element in the speculation of St. Thomas, a hitherto little stressed fact which in the Neo-Scholastic revival of his philosophy is still too scantily evaluated.

**The transcendentals.** As transcendental determinations of being, St. Thomas, along with Albert and others, lists *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, *res*, and *aliquid* (the one, the true, the good, thing, and something). These are determinations which are found in every being. St. Thomas stressed the fact that none of these transcendentals add anything new to being, but simply permit us to consider being under one aspect or the other. The development of these various modes of the intellect for the consideration and contemplation of being as contained in *De Veritate*, I, 1, is classical. This shows how in his speculation, above all, in his ontology, St. Thomas kept an open mind on the discussion of the origin of our knowledge in the intellect itself; to establish "points of view" is not possible without at least a partially spontaneous process on the part of the intellect. It would be well worthwhile to investigate this problem further.

**The categories.** The same thing may be said also of his teaching on the categories. When treating Aristotle, we remarked how for him the idea of substance was derived from human reasoning and from human speech. St. Thomas did not look askance at these sources. Along with Aristotle he assumed that the categories are not mere modes of predication but are also in fact first and foremost modes or grades (*gradus*) of being, as he wrote so interestingly in the *De Veritate*, I, 1 — clearly a reminder of Neo-Platonic terminology. In contrast to the predicaments (categories), only the predicables (genus, species, difference, properties, and accidents) are second intentions or ways of understanding and as such belong in logic. From Aristotle

St. Thomas also appropriated the number of categories and their division into two great groups: substance on the one hand and nine accidents on the other (concerning the individual categories, consult H. Meyer, *Thomas von Aquin*, p. 131 ff.; English translation: *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* [St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1944], pp. 97–123, 134–140).

**Hierarchy of values.** In addition to the Aristotelian division of being, St. Thomas also accepted the Platonic speculation on the various degrees of value. This consideration deeply permeated his metaphysics. This we can see in his proofs for the existence of God derived from the analysis of the degrees of perfection, as well as in his doctrine that our notions in regard to being are realized primarily first in God, but in the order of knowledge are known from, and denominated by, a consideration of the world (*S. C. G.*, I, 34). There are also differences of value in being: “A builder does not make all parts of the house equally valuable, but gives them greater or less importance inasmuch as this is required for the good disposition of the house. . . . In the same way in His wisdom God did not make all things in the universe of equal worth, because if He had, the universe, lacking many grades of being, would be imperfect” (*De Anima*, 7; *The Soul*, trans. J. P. Rowan [St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1949], pp. 84–85). It is precisely the diversity of forms which makes the idea of degrees necessary: “This is evident to anyone who studies the nature of things. For if he consider carefully he will find that the diversity of things is made up of degrees, since above inanimate bodies he will find plants, and above these irrational animals, above these intelligent substances, and in each one of these he will find diversity according as some are more perfect than others” (*S. C. G.*, III, 97; *The Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, A. Pegis, ed., Vol. II, p. 190).

In these reflections we are not dealing with the axiom which develops the convertibility of *ens* and *bonum*, but with a Neo-Platonic thought with which St. Thomas had become acquainted in Pseudo-Dionysius, who in this connection was frequently quoted. Here as there the degree of value is measured by the greater or less proximity to the One; and here as there genuine Neo-Platonic ideas, especially the scale of intelligences, on the last rung of which the human soul stands, are stressed. Basically, however, we are dealing with a variation of the Platonic doctrine of ideas and of dialectics, of its theory of participation, and its pyramid of ideas. Although here the notion of

emanation lurks in the background, and although the fullness rather than the forms of being is revealed — this fullness becomes so much the stronger, the closer we approach its source — we must not mistake this association, because the arrangement of the scale is to be found in a greater or less degree of imitability in relation to the prototype. Here again we can appreciate how even Thomistic metaphysics must be understood and judged in the light of Platonic motives.

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF BEING

For the further exploration of being, St. Thomas accepts the four Aristotelian principles of substance along with the notions of matter and form, causality and finality. To this we must add also the notion of exemplary cause derived from Platonic-Augustinian speculation.

**Substance.** 1) *First substance.* The metaphysics of St. Thomas is a metaphysics of substance. The notion of substance has a very long history behind it and may, as a consequence, denote several things. It may at one time have the same meaning as matter; at another, as the form; at still another, as the composite of both. In Aristotle, the last-mentioned meaning is the focal point of his metaphysics. It is his first substance; and it is not only substance absolutely but at the same time reproduces the original meaning of being. This is true also of St. Thomas, as he explains at the very beginning of *De Ente et Essentia*: "Being is predicated absolutely and primarily of substance" (*On Being and Essence*, Ch. I, trans. A. A. Maurer [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949], p. 29). Its concept, together with its different nuances (*substantia*, *suppositum*, *hypostasis*, *natura rei*, *persona*), is precisely analyzed and explained in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 29, 2) as well as in *De Potentia* (IX, 1 and 2). The essential feature of substance is its existence in itself (*per se esse*). Substance is neither self-causality nor the lack of causality; it is not an "existing of itselfness" (*a se*); for every substance is created, except of course the divine, which alone is *a se* or of itself. In this explanation, furthermore, the interweaving of substance into a series of causes is not excluded by the notion itself. Actually what is intended by this notion of substance is a mode of existence which, as a kind of independence, differentiates it from the complete lack of independence which is present in accidents, which must always inhere in something else (*ens in alio*). Not only Aristotle but also St. Thomas was of the opinion that this differentiation forces itself directly on our natural vision in experience. Likewise in conformity with Aristotle,

he agreed that our speculation as well as our speech requires and develops the notion of substance, because we make all predication of a "subject," that is, of something that lies underneath (*substratum*); and finally, becoming cannot be explained without it, for all becoming must take place and be completed in something if it is not to be reduced to an incoherence.

2) *Second substance*. In addition to this first substance, in the sense of something concrete and particular, St. Thomas recognized second substance, which denotes that which in many individual things is found to be identical, the common nature (*natura communis*). This coincides with the species or genus. St. Thomas prefers, however, to call it essence or quiddity (*essentia, quidditas*). This is expressed by the definition. This second substance is related to the first substance as its formal part, just as manhood is referred to Socrates (*De Pot.*, 9, 1). This second substance is not for St. Thomas a mere universal "notion" but "an *apriori* by nature" as we will soon see. Here again he is entirely at one with Aristotle, and by this theory, he along with Aristotle makes it possible for a portion of Platonism to continue to live on (cf. p. 163 f.).

3) *Matter and form*. Behind these views lies hylemorphism with its two principles of matter and form. "Now that which is in the individual substance besides the common nature is individual matter (which is the principle of individuation) and consequently individual accidents which determine this same matter" (*De Pot.*, 9, 1; *On the Power of God*, trans. L. Shapcoate [Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952], Third Book, p. 98). In this and in similar explanations elsewhere, the two principles are clearly separated one from the other. To understand them we must keep before our eyes all that had contributed to their development in Aristotle (cf. p. 165). The same assumptions were also realized in St. Thomas.

a) *Matter*. The notion of matter is presented to us in a twofold way: as first matter, which is entirely undetermined but determinable in a multitude of respects; and as second matter, which is after a fashion already formed, at least by means of quantitative determinations, but is still capable of further formation, of further determination. Only second matter can be looked upon as the principle of individuation (*materia quantitate signata*). Matter as such is not actual, but only as it is formed. It is therefore evident that the form is the more important principle.

b) *Form*. By form St. Thomas understood the limitation of matter

to a definite being (*In IV Phys.*, 1, 1). Being does not need several forms but requires only one to be determined in its totality and in all its parts, to be determined to its "thisness." Reasoning in true Aristotelian fashion, St. Thomas places great stress on the fact that first substance includes matter and does not exist solely by reason of the form; nevertheless in *De Ente et Essentia*, cap. 2, he explains that it is only the form which in its own peculiar way causes the actuality of a substance (*suo modo sola forma est causa*). The importance of matter is limited to paper value; for even if it does determine a thing, it can do so only insofar as it itself is already determined by the reception of a form. Add to this explanation "that the form is nothing else than a divine likeness existing by participation in things" (*divina similitudo participata in rebus*), whose infinite perfection is displayed only through the forms, just as we must explain one and the same set of circumstances by the use of many words (*S. C. G.*, III, 97; A. Pegis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 189). In God is contained everything of being that will exist, even the contradictory in a genuine set of opposites. "Things diverse and in themselves opposed to each other pre-exist in God as one, without injury to His simplicity" (*S. T.*, I, 4, 2, ad 1; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 22). It is evident in this identification of Aristotelian forms with Augustinian ideas in the mind of God (*S. T.*, I, 84, 1 and 5) that to St. Thomas the form actually denotes the *apriori* by nature, and thus Platonism has a foothold in the very center of his metaphysics—not however in contradiction of Aristotle but in a reproduction and renewal of his basic Platonic motives which are not examined thoroughly in their historical background but only looked at congenially, i.e., with a likeness of tastes and interests. In this connection the theory of Aquinas in regard to the problem of universals is given a very definite meaning.

c) Universals. St. Thomas took up the threefold division of the universals, viz., *ante rem*, *in re*, *et post rem* as these were generally known to Scholasticism. He explains that the universals as such, under the aspects of their universality, are only in the mind (therefore, *post rem*) but in reality appear only in their individual actualization (pointing at the *in re*). In so doing, he raises a difficulty for the understanding of the universals *ante rem*, because these universals *ante rem* denote the proper intrinsic nature of a thing, which determines and absorbs everything, for it is only the form which actualizes substance. For the scholar it would be well worthwhile to try to explain St. Thomas by St. Augustine; for, despite a differ-

ence in terminology, not only in his psychology does the soul absorb the entire man, even the bodily element, but also in his metaphysics matter is reduced ultimately to the ideal order — only the words seem to sound differently. We interpret him differently, because, if we should encounter Aristotle in St. Thomas, we would read his name only in the light of the interpretation of Aristotle that was current in the nineteenth century.

4) *Act and potency.* Matter as something to be determined and form as something determining contain in their concepts the notion of something passive in relation to something active. Through this we can understand that with these two Aristotelian notions of matter and form that other set of twins, potency and act, is made to conform. For this there is, however, a still more profound reason. In opposition to Plato, Aristotle had objected: With ideas we cannot alone build a house. We cannot adequately explain the world simply by means of the static moment of determining forms and the limitations of being; we need a further moment, the viewpoint of the dynamic. Aristotle satisfied this self-imposed requirement through his concept of the efficient cause, the so-called principle of movement. And to it corresponds that scheme of speculation which is posited by the two concepts of potency and act. These are two ultimates. We cannot derive them from anything else, but we can reach them deductively as, for example, by noting the difference between sleeping and being awake, by repose and activity, by a closed eye and clear-sightedness. St. Thomas was in agreement with the reflections which led Aristotle to develop the concepts of potency and act. The assumptions are the same here as they were there (*In I Phys.*, I, 9 and 14). And in accordance with these assumptions St. Thomas understood the concepts. Potency means possible being, not in the sense of a logical lack of contradiction, but in the sense of a modality of being. Potency is also being, but of an imperfect kind; it has not as yet reached its objective; it is still capable of being formed but needs an efficient agent; only through such does it become actual, whereas before it was only possibility. This possibility can be absolute (passive potency, corresponding to first matter) or relative in the sense of possible further actualization of something already actualized, e.g., the seminal reasons (active potency, corresponding to second matter). The act is actuality and realization, consequently the perfection and good (*bonum*) of potency. Being perfected in this fashion is called the first act (the *πρώτη ἐντελέχεια* of Aristotle); the active being

(*agere*) of this existent reality (*esse*) supplies the second act. Act is always prior to the potency not only in concept and in time, but also by nature (*πρότερον τῇ φύσει* of Aristotle), as well as in purpose.

By this theory a fundamental axiom is set down — an axiom which supports the whole metaphysics of Aquinas and qualifies it for its supreme achievements — namely, the reference to the beginning and the end of being in God. God is the supreme actuality, *actus purus*. At the other extreme we have absolute potentiality. Between these extremes is ranged the whole realm of being conceived as a mixture of potentiality and actuality, as a process of continuous realization from the terminus of nothing to the terminus of infinite perfection. This realm is created being and God, its beginning. And He must be that if there is to be any being at all, because act is prior to potency. God is also its end, because the act is the perfection of the potency toward which it strives and toward which it tends.

5) *Essence and existence.* The distinction between created and uncreated being is fundamental to Scholastic metaphysics and it is propounded by St. Thomas through the theory of essence and existence which he drew not from Aristotle but from Avicenna. God is pure act; a creature is a composite of actuality and potency — as we have already seen. Now Thomas asserts: God is being, but creatures have being (*Deus est suum esse. . . nulla creatura est suum esse sed habens esse*); in God essence and existence are one, they coincide; in all creatures they are distinct (*S. C. G.*, II, 22 and 52).

The argument for this thesis is as follows: "Whatever does not belong to the notion of an essence or quiddity comes from without and enters into composition with the essence, for no essence is intelligible without its parts. Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being known of its existing. I can know what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it exists in reality. From this it is clear that the act of existing is other than the essence or quiddity" (*De Ente et Essentia*, cap. iv; trans. A. Maurer, *On Being and Essence*, pp. 45-46). By such a proof St. Thomas was able to introduce a composition into even purely spiritual substances and thus vanquish all pantheism. He rejected the teaching of Avencebrol that spiritual beings are composed of matter and form; only corporeal substances exhibit such a composition, whereas the spiritual substances are pure forms. Because of this distinction, St. Thomas differentiated between angels specifically and not

numerically (*quot sunt ibi individua, tot sunt ibi species*), but he demanded a composition of essence and existence in them. "Although substances of this kind are forms alone and immaterial they are not in every way simple so as to be pure act. They do have an admixture of potency" (*ibid.*, ch. 4; ed. Maurer, p. 45). "Given that the form itself subsists without matter, there nevertheless remains the relation of the form to its very being, as of potentiality to act" (S. T., I, 50, 2 ad 3; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 261). St. Thomas appears to have understood that the distinction between essence and existence was a real distinction and not simply one of reason. Thus at least the representatives of the faculty of liberal arts thought, for they denied the real distinction on the authority of Aristotle and Averroës. The entire problem first became acute when Henry of Ghent savagely attacked the real distinction and Giles (Aegidius) of Rome, a disciple of St. Thomas, defended it with equal energy.

Three points can be established in St. Thomas' teaching on essence and existence—thoughts that are of importance for the history of philosophy. These are: the further development of the doctrine of potency and act, which we have just touched upon; the survival of the Neo-Platonic concept of participation in a terminology which is adapted to Aristotle (S. C. G., II, 52); and finally—and this is intensely interesting—the separation of reasoning from being, which appears almost modern. In this separation the new non-Platonic concept of reality is developed—that concept which had been handed down by Aristotle, the Stoics, and Christianity. In this theory, the idea perceived by reason and the reasoning process is no longer considered to be reality, as St. Anselm had still assumed it to be without questioning it in his ontological proof for the existence of God; existence has no longer anything to do with the concept; that is to say, existence is no longer tied up solely with the idea. We can, for example, think of a phoenix without knowing whether or not it exists. This whole development is remarkable, since form was originally act. Even to Boethius the *quo est* is given with the form; here it is the *quod est* to which existence (the *quo est*, which now has, as a consequence, another meaning) must first be added.

**Causality.** 1) *The principle of causality.* In a broader sense St. Thomas, following Aristotle, had understood by causality the four principles: matter, form, the origin of motion, and purpose. In a narrow sense he assumed as cause only the origin of motion. Insofar as it is responsible for motion it is called the efficient cause. And

this causality we now subject to a closer scrutiny. That there was such a thing as efficient causality constituted no problem for St. Thomas, as it had not for Aristotle. Causality is evident and a matter of public knowledge: "The world leads more evidently to the knowledge of the divine creating power" (*S. T.*, I, 46, 1 ad 6; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 242). The formulas for this assumption are derived either from a Platonic source, the *Timaeus*—everything that "becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause; for without a cause nothing can be created" (*Timaeus*, 28 a; ed. Jowett, Vol. I, p. 12); or from an Aristotelian source—everything that is in motion must have been moved by something else; or from an Aristotelian axiom—act is prior to potency. This proposition in regard to causality is not proved, even when it would appear as if such proof were being attempted, e.g., *S. T.*, I, 2, 3 and *S. C. G.*, I, 13, but it is always taken for granted or assumed.

2) *Essence of the efficient cause.* According to St. Thomas, the mechanical impulse is of the very essence of the efficient cause. For the initiation of bodily movement a physical contact is required (*S. C. G.*, II, 20). This view corresponds to the concept of efficient causality with which Aristotle had hoped to validate "reality" in opposition to the idealism of Plato. The efficient cause is, nevertheless, not the same as modern mechanical causality, but something more, as is evident from an examination of the causal principles.

These principles are given in such axioms as *agere sequitur esse*, *actiones sunt suppositorum, modus operandi sequitur modum essendi, omne ens agit sibi simile, nihil agit ultra suam speciem*. As St. Thomas states, "every agent acts so far as it is in act. Hence, the mode of an agent's power in acting accords with its mode of act; man begets man, and fire begets fire" (*S. C. G.*, II, 22; *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*, Book Two: *Creation*, translated by J. F. Anderson [New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1955], p. 66). From these principles we can see immediately how all efficient causality essentially consists in formation, in a transfer of being, in a revelation of substance—a viewpoint which clashes radically with the superficial concept of substance which claims to see in this concept something inflexible, mere building blocks of reality. This principle of form is so sharply stressed that St. Thomas, in his entire speculation with regard to the dynamics of material reality, refuses to permit matter to "reduce" its seed-like powers, as St. Bonaventure and St. Albert had assumed. St.

Thomas prefers to speak of the “induction” of forms into matter (*De Malo*, I, 3).

With Aristotle, St. Thomas reduced the efficient to a formal cause (*De Veritate*, 28, 7), and insofar as he did so he admitted a Platonic element—a Platonism which in Aristotle formed the basis for such an identification (see above, p. 173). In addition, St. Thomas took from Pseudo-Dionysius the view of Plotinus that the cause is always more sublime and embraces more being than the effect, because it contains the effect in a pre-eminent way (*eminentiore modo*), so that in the First, Supreme Cause—in God—everything is contained (S. T., I, 4, 2). All of this makes it quite clear that with St. Thomas Aristotelianism and Platonism are reduced to a common denominator even in the matter of the principle of causality.

3) *Kinds of efficient causes.* As elsewhere, so in this matter of efficient causality, St. Thomas knew how to distinguish various types. There are, for example, the essential cause (*causa per se*) and the accidental cause (*causa per accidens*). It is characteristic of the former that it intends its purpose directly, that the effect manifests a distinct similarity to its cause, and that the cause develops in a fixed order in a line with its effect. In an accidental cause these three factors are not present. Another important distinction is that between the First Cause and the secondary causes. The First Cause is God, upon whom all causality depends insofar as He gives things all their being and all their activity. Nothing can act except by virtue of the First Cause (S. C. G., III, 6 f.). Commentators have been at loggerheads trying to decide whether the First Cause operates in and works directly and immediately on the activity of the secondary causes (*praemotio physica* of the Thomists) or whether St. Thomas saw in the co-operation of God simply this, that the forms of things had been created by Him and according to them their activity necessarily unfolds (*mediate concursus*). It is certain that St. Thomas sought to recognize an independent causality in secondary causes, just as he assumed that along with one substance which exists of itself (*a se*) there are still other genuine substances (*entia per se*) although they are *entia ab alio*, or beings dependent on another.

**Teleology.** 1) *End or purpose.* The importance of the idea of form in all efficient causality is again manifest in what St. Thomas had to say about the final cause. In his opuscule, *De principiis naturae*, we read: “Purpose (end) is the cause of efficient causality,

for it makes it possible for an agent to act. This purpose permits matter to become matter and form form; for matter assumes the form only as its end and the form completes matter only for the sake of the end (purpose). For this reason the end is the cause of causes, for it is the cause of causality in all causes." Aristotle himself had also made identical the efficient, formal, and final causes. When he accorded priority to the final cause, St. Thomas brought himself into agreement with the intention of Aristotle, who had explained that matter tends toward the form. In this view finality is especially brought to our attention. Purpose was originally known only in reference to speculation on *technē* or art. Out of this specific type of reasoning the matter-form schema was developed by Plato and Aristotle and injected not only into the doctrine of ideas but also into Aristotelian hylemorphism (see above, p. 179 f.). Such a source enables us to understand better the teleology present in St. Thomas' metaphysics of substance-form.

2) *The prototype.* To these surroundings the exemplary cause was no stranger. The end (purpose) appears as a model, in view of which the artist creates and because of which he bestows both being and becoming on his handiwork. In view of such exemplars the Divine Architect creates, as we read in the *Timaeus*; and in a similar fashion St. Thomas permits the whole world to come into being. And also for him the work or activity of the Creator is always explained by reference to the activity of the artist or craftsman. For this reason final causes are also exemplary causes, and in accordance with the example set by St. Augustine, these are to be sought in the eternal ideas present in the mind of God (S. T., I, 15, 1 and 2; 16, 1). In Divine Being (*ipsum esse*) we have the *actuality* of all reality and also of all forms (S. T., I, 4, 1 ad 3), so that the whole world is a likeness of God (S. T., I, 4, 3).

3) *The order of the whole.* From all this a perfect order for all being naturally follows. The concept of *ordo* governs the whole philosophy of Aquinas. In the entire universe no being exists purposelessly. There is a supreme final end to which everything is subordinated, and according to which everything is regulated, viz., the *summum bonum* which is God. In this subordination and regulation we can perceive a nearer and a farther, a higher and a lower, in reference to the supreme final end. To this are added scales and measures, genus and species, forms and substances in both being and becoming (S. T., I, 5, 5). "Thou hast ordered all things in measure,

and number and weight" is cited by St. Thomas, and he adds in explanation: "measure" denotes the degree of perfection; "number," the multiplicity and diversity of species which result from them; "weight," the natural powers, original natures, and impulses in all the events of the cosmic process which flow from them (*S. C. G.*, III, 97). St. Thomas thus offers a complete teleology of being and of becoming.

4) *An evaluation for the history of philosophy.* In order correctly to evaluate the philosophical importance of this theory, we must bear in mind how this teleology originated: It did not derive from a complete induction of all happenings and their actual mutual interrelation and order. Such an induction could be established only with a great deal of trouble by the facts of experience, after we had assumed a complete lack of order (the modern teleological problem). We would arrive at the correct notion of the origin of teleology only on the basis of an *apriori* ideology which directly viewed the forms, their interdependence and their associations, and considered the purposes and the tendencies present in the planning and the creating of man the maker, *homo faber* ( $\tau\epsilon\chi\nu\kappa\acute{o}\delta$ ,  $\delta\eta\mu\sigma\nu\rho\gamma\acute{o}\delta$ ) and then, by transferring this type of technological speculation to the universe, to believe that we could perceive it there. In this fashion we would arrive at that aetiology (the second journey of the *Phaedo* and the form as cause in Aristotle) and the axiology (the end or purpose is for Aristotle still a good, an  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$ ) which is present in the characteristic reasoning of the Platonic dialectics, in the Aristotelian doctrine of forms, in the Neo-Platonic emanationism, in the Augustinian teaching on the *lex aeterna*, and in the hierarchy of being in the Pseudo-Areopagite. All these various stages of the long journey through the history of philosophy enter into the teleology of Aquinas and become a comprehensive synthesis. The revival and the systematic speculative development of Thomistic philosophy cannot simply take for granted the Aristotelianism in St. Thomas, and then, looking to the matter only incidentally as an historical reality, simply refer to Neo-Platonic and Augustinian elements present in his writings. This new interest in St. Thomas must reach some conclusion about the problem of what kind of Aristotelianism is actually found in what he propounded. Since the historical Aristotle has become a problem for us, this mediaeval Aristotelianism takes on even greater proportions. Where is the starting point of Thomistic metaphysics? In the Platonic heritage of Aristotelianism or in the empiricism of Alexander or in the principles of Neo-Platonism?

# CHAPTER 20

## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—II: THEODICY, PSYCHOLOGY, ETHICS

### GOD

When St. Thomas pursues the ultimate reasons of things in the various domains of philosophy, he always finds them in God. God is not an accidental, superficial appendage to his philosophy; He forms the first foundation for St. Thomas' entire doctrine of being. The metaphysics of God is, as it was for Aristotle, only a further development of his ontology.

#### 1. PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

**From motion.** St. Thomas resolves the question whether or not God exists by his "five ways to God." These five proofs have since become famous; they are indubitably classic in their clarity and conciseness (*S. T.*, I, 2, 3; *S. C. G.*, I, 13). The first proof, that taken from motion (*ex parte motus*), which stems from Aristotle, is for the first time evaluated practically for Scholasticism by St. Thomas. It begins with the data of experience, namely, that of motion. It runs as follows: Everything that is in motion must have been moved by something else, since nothing is able to move itself; and because we cannot regress endlessly while positing a dependence of the thing being moved on the mover—if there were no prime mover, there could not be a second, for all secondary causes depend upon a first—we must finally assume the existence of a First Mover which cannot be moved by anything else, but is itself free of motion; this we call God.

**From efficient causality.** The second "way" takes as its starting point the efficient cause (*ex ratione causae efficientis*). We know that every cause in the world of sense is itself caused; and this in turn is also caused, and so on; for nothing can be the cause of itself. By this line of reasoning we stress the fact that recourse to an infinite series

of causes explains nothing—if there were no such thing as a First Cause, there could be no mediate and no ultimate cause; this means that an infinite series of causes is impossible—and as a consequence there must be an ultimate cause, which all men call God. This proof, too, St. Thomas introduced for the first time into Scholasticism. In constructing it he received his original impetus from Avicenna, but the fundamental notions contained in it are Aristotelian.

**From contingency.** The third “way” is concerned with the notion of contingency (*ex possibili et necessario*). St. Thomas takes pains to make clear that all being could just as well not be as be: nothing is necessary; everything is accordingly replete with potentiality. From this it follows that merely possible being did at one time not exist. If there were, as a consequence, only contingent being, then there would be absolutely nothing now. There must, therefore, be a necessary being — necessary either in itself or for some external reason. And since dependency of this kind cannot be found in an infinite series, we arrive at a being that is necessary of and in itself. In this proof St. Thomas drew upon Aristotle and also upon Moses Maimonides.

Basically these three “ways” form only one proof. The two central thoughts contained in them are the principle of causality and the proposition that a regress into infinity is impossible. Later on these considerations will be called the cosmological proof. The arguments which St. Thomas uses as its basis are contained essentially in the seventh and the eighth books of Aristotle’s *Physics*. Jaeger’s explicit statement that the metaphysics contained in these books—namely, the metaphysics of matter and form, act and potency, the principle of motion and the teleological explanation of nature which is joined to it—“has its source in and rests on the foundation laid down by the Academy under the watchful eye of Plato” shows that these principles were developed by Aristotle, not in his mature years, but during the period in which he was still a Platonist. This viewpoint creates a new environment for a critical evaluation of the cosmological proof as developed by St. Thomas and also for an evaluation of Kant’s criticism. Even in this matter, then, it is evident that the philosophy of St. Thomas has a Platonic foundation—a fact that we have repeatedly demonstrated. For this reason we cannot consider the other arguments as foreign bodies, that is to say, as “Platonic” elements in an “Aristotelian” system.

**From the degrees of perfection.** The fourth proof (*ex gradibus*

*perfectionum*) recognizes behind the greater or lesser perfection of the world a supreme perfection which furnishes us with a ready-made standard by which we are enabled to speak of a "greater" or a "lesser." This supreme perfection is also the exemplar for everything that is of value in the world, because values share in it — *causa* is in this connection the same as "exemplar," in the sense of a hypothesis, not an efficient cause. In such a line of reasoning we can detect Platonic, Augustinian, and Anselmian views.

**From order.** The fifth "way" from the government of the world (*ex gubernatione mundi*) is the teleological proof for the existence of God. This proof was first presented by the Stoics, especially by Cicero and Seneca. St. Thomas' reasoning is as follows: evident in the world are both order and the pursuance of purpose (or end); as a consequence there must be a supreme intelligence present through which this pursuance can be explained.

St. Thomas rejected the contention that the notion of God is innate, that God can be looked at directly and immediately, as well as the proof for God's existence that had been advanced by St. Anselm (cf. p. 361 f.). As an historical fact it is interesting to note that St. Thomas did not for a moment doubt that he had discovered the God of religion by means of his philosophical reasoning. It is Aquinas' completely independent being (*ens a se*) whom "all call God." To the modern objection that the God of religion is something entirely different — He is majestic, awesome, bewitching, mysterious — he would have answered: Only the thought processes are different; the object is always the same.

## 2. THE ESSENCE OF GOD

**Attributes.** If we should further develop the implications contained in these proofs for the existence of God, we would naturally be enabled to derive some knowledge of God's essence. According to these "ways" God must be an *ens a se*; insofar as He is the first principle, He must surpass all other beings; He must be unbegotten and eternal, absolutely necessary and perfect, and must be a living spirit. That there is only one God becomes clear from the notion of God given by the proofs advanced for the existence of God (S. T., I, 11, 3 and 4).

**God is *ipsum esse*.** The criterion which St. Thomas employs by preference in regard to the nature of God is the concept of *ipsum esse subsistens*. God's "essence is not other than His act of existing"

(*De Ente et Essentia*, ch. IV; trans. Maurer, p. 50). "In God being itself is His existence" (*In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 1). It is precisely for this reason that Sacred Scripture describes God in these words: "I am who am." The *ipsum ens*, as St. Thomas explains in *De Ente et Essentia*, is not synonymous with *ens universale*. The concept of being in general is the emptiest and at the same time the most impoverished notion that we can possibly have; it is identical with the purely formal notion of "something." God, however, is the fullness of being, the absolute sum total of every perfection — so infinite that nothing new can be added to our concept of Him for the purpose of perfecting it further, for the very simple reason that every possible perfection is already contained in it. The notion of God as being itself, in the sense of the fullness of being, is manifestly Neo-Platonic.

St. Thomas has given us the best explanation of this concept of God as being itself (*ipsum ens*) in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 4, 1 ad 3). There we read that being itself (*ipsum ens*) is the actuality of all things (*actualitas omnium rerum*), therefore the power of powers, the life of lives, the existence of existences — this is Aristotelianism. But *ipsum ens* is also the actuality of all forms (*actualitas omnium formarum*), hence the form of forms which in all their variety correspond with it, the infinite (S. T., I, 4, 2) — this is Platonic philosophy. Since in Aristotle everything dynamic has a form, and since in Plato all forms are able to be efficient causes — it was this notion of Plato which allowed Aristotle to say that the form is act — the synthesis of St. Thomas is not a contradiction but a happily inspired point of view in which the final intentions of both great Greeks find expression.

**Predication of our notions about God.** 1) *By way of negation and gradation.* St. Thomas renders us a special service by showing in what sense we can express our concepts of God when we try to describe His properties and His nature. After the fashion that had been traditional since Patristic times, St. Thomas taught we should rather say what God is *not* rather than what He *is* (*via negationis*), and that whenever we do make positive statements about Him, we should ascribe to Him the content of our notions in a sense that He eminently surpasses everything else (transcendent sense) (*via eminentiae*). By so doing we do not express a mere gradual elevation of such notions as those of good or of spirit or of life or of being, in which the essence of created and divine goodness, of spirit and of life and of being, would be the same. This would amount to a univocal

predication which would basically reduce the divine and the earthly to the same denominator and thus promote pantheism. Naturally we cannot give these abstract terms and expressions completely different conceptual meanings (equivocal assertions) because in so doing we would be forced to confess that we knew nothing whatsoever about God (agnosticism).

2) *Analological knowledge of God.* Our concepts must therefore have an analogical meaning; that is, they should join together both identity and differentiation. Despite all differentiation there is something possessed in common both by God and by the world, as Plato had realized when he formulated his concept of *methexis* or participation. In this concept he had tried to make clear that everything strives to be as the idea itself, but always falls short of its realization; nevertheless, the beings that do fall short exist only by means of the idea, which is present in them, in which everything shares and by which everything is designated. Analogy is essential to the doctrine of ideas; in fact, it expresses the concept of participation even in its terminology, *ἀνὰ λόγον* = *ἀνὰ τὴν ὁδόν*; "according to the word = according to the idea." When St. Thomas (*S. C. G.*, I, 34 and *passim*) explains that all being is first realized primarily in God (in the *modus essendi*) and that only as regards the manner of being known (*modus cognoscendi*) is God described in accordance with the things in this our world, such an explanation is nothing more than the doctrine that the idea alone has true being and that created things possess being only through participation.

### 3. GOD AND THE WORLD

**Creation out of nothing.** From the notion of God as *ipsum esse* in the sense of absolute actuality, St. Thomas derived the principles for a metaphysics of the world. They are the following: If God is pure act and as such the cause of the universe, the world must have been created out of nothing; for if anything existed from the very beginning along with God, for example, eternal matter, God would not be the cause of the universe (*S. T.*, I, 1 and 2).

**Preservation of the world.** We may draw, secondly, from the correct notion of God a proposition concerning the preservation or conservation of the world. The world not only had a beginning; it is continuously dependent upon God. Because created being in its essence exists only through participation, this created being must, because of its essential and consequently permanent contingency, constantly

receive its actuality from the eternal fullness of being. This preservation is not, however, an ever new creative act, but a continuance of creation (*creatio continua*), an activity which denotes a pure metaphysical relationship of being "without either motion or time" (*S. T.*, I, 104, 1 ad 4).

**Government of the world.** From this notion of God there results, thirdly, the proposition concerning the government of and order in the world. God as pure act is form. Now, form is an idea and an idea is a living spirit. God is the "Thought of thought" says St. Thomas in unison with Aristotle. For this reason He transcends the world not only as act but also as Logos. In God there are consequently ideas, even of particular things, as St. Thomas in agreement with St. Augustine assumes in opposition to the teaching of the Averroists (*S. T.*, I, 15; 14, 11) and God is omniscient and all-wise (*S. T.*, I, 14). The government of the world by His providence belongs, consequently, to His innermost nature (*S. T.*, I, 22). The problems of freedom and fate which are connected with this doctrine are solved by reference to Boethius and his *Consolation of Philosophy*.

**Eternity of creation.** St. Thomas adopted a unique position in regard to the problem of the eternity of the world. In conjunction with Aristotle, Latin Averroism maintained the eternity of the world. St. Thomas rejected such an eternity, if by it its advocates meant to show that the world did not require creation — and with philosophical proof. If by it, however, they wished to say that creation was eternal, he made the following distinction: From the standpoint of faith, we know that the creation of the world is not eternal; from the standpoint of pure philosophy, the reasons advanced by Aristotle for an eternal motion and an eternal world can neither be conclusively proved to be true nor conclusively refuted as untrue (*S. T.*, I, 46, 1; *In VIII Phys.*, 1, 2).

## THE SOUL

The study of the soul must have greatly interested St. Thomas both as a philosopher and as a Christian theologian. He occupied himself with it in various ways. The chief points of his psychology are to be found in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 75-90; I-II, 22-48) and the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (II, 46-90). These are not, as we might expect, pure deductions, but present, especially in the section devoted to the emotions, a richness of empirical data drawn from both his

own personal observation and that of others. In this connection, St. Thomas again attempts an evaluation of Aristotle together with his notions, problems, propositions, suggestions, and fundamental positions.

### 1. THE EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL

Why must we assume the existence of a soul? St. Thomas expresses himself on this point as follows: We observe that there are corporeal substances which are differentiated from other bodies by the fact that they are capable of immanent action (self-movement), nourishment, reproduction, sense perception, and possess a conative faculty. We call these substances living bodies. Such special characteristics must be derived from a special principle, for *agere sequitur esse*. From the fact that these substances possess corporeal being we cannot conclude that they possess life; otherwise we would be forced to admit that all bodies are living. Since this does not follow, in the case of living bodies we must be able to find in them something more than corporeal being. And this further principle, this something more, we call the soul. By this explanation St. Thomas revived an ancient notion of the soul—that notion which sees life only in the sense of self-motion, in Plato as well as in Aristotle. A soul of this kind is possessed both by plants and by animals. It is the *anima vegetativa* (plant soul) and the *anima sensitiva* (the animal soul).

### 2. THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

**Immateriality.** In the case of human beings we must make an exception. Man is not only a living being but an animal endowed with rationality (*animal rationale*). And from this point on St. Thomas proceeds to develop the argument we have already indicated. The uniqueness of a human being, his reasoning and his rationally guided free will, demand a specific principle. Of what kind is the soul of a human being? St. Thomas answers: Since reasoning and rationally guided free will are essentially spiritual and hence of the immaterial order, the soul of man must be immaterial (*anima rationalis* = *intellectiva*). Since the representations of the imagination only accompany reasoning, they do not form the essence of its notions, of its judgments, or of its syllogisms. Otherwise the soul would never be in a position to conceive of bodies by means of universal concepts, but would be forced to deal and to depend entirely on particulars, since everything corporeal is particular.

**Substantiality.** From the spirituality of thought we can deduce

the substantiality of the soul. If reasoning abstracts from sensible reality only the material, and if the images or representations of the phantasy accompany the reasoning processes only as an auxiliary, whereas reasoning itself, in its own proper actuality, is essentially something different, is spiritual, an essential independence becomes apparent. Thus again in conformity with the principle *agere sequitur esse*, the principle of this more noble spirituality, the human spiritual soul, must be something existing independently; it must be a substance (S. T., I, 75, 2). Since in the activity of the vegetative soul and of the animal soul we cannot discern such an essential spiritual autonomy, we have no reason to hold that they are subsistent and we must assume that they are destroyed along with the body (S. T., I, 75, 3).

**Immortality.** By such reasoning we are supplied with proof for the immortality of the human soul. Because of its essential subsistence, the human soul is left untouched by the death of the body (S. T., I, 75, 6). A presupposition for this argument is the thesis of the essential spirituality of reasoning which St. Thomas took from Aristotle, who perceived in the active or agent intellect something unmixed, divine, and immortal. St. Thomas, however, conceived the subsistence of the soul—which in accordance with its derivation denotes primarily the essential specific difference of the immaterial activity which is exercised by the spiritual soul—as individual substantiality. This thought is not too clearly expressed in Aristotle and affords the reason why the monopsychism of the Averroists was capable of thriving as it did. Here St. Thomas deals with the Christian concept of the individual mortal soul, with which we had become acquainted very early in the Patristic period.

**Form of the body.** In view of such a sharply stressed individual subsistence of the soul there emerges naturally and almost inevitably the question: How can the soul, whose origin in existence must be unique, still be the form of the body? On this point St. Thomas expressed himself in the language of Aristotle and chose to consider the soul actually as the form of the body (Aristotle had recognized in the vital soul the form of the body, and even Plato saw in it the principle of life). Thus, in conformity with his hylemorphism, St. Thomas postulates a substantial union of the two (S. T., I, 76, 1).

1) *Man, a true composite or an accidental one.* We cannot overlook the fact that the notion of the independent subsistence of the soul points more clearly in the direction of the Platonic-Augustinian

*parapositum* or accidental union of the body and the soul than in that of the Aristotelian *compositum*. Nevertheless, St. Thomas seeks to retain his hylemorphism, because it would otherwise become difficult to explain how we could say: This *man* thinks. If the soul should not be the form of a determined body, e.g., Socrates, then Socrates himself would not think, but an impersonal "It" would take over this function in Socrates. "There remains therefore no other explanation than that given by Aristotle" (S. T., I, 76, 1; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 372). And in what concerns the subsistence of the soul, we would be faced with a unique case: "The soul communicates that existence in which its subsists to the corporeal matter, out of which and the intellectual soul there results unity of existence; so that the existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul. This is not the case with other non-subsistent forms" (S. T., I, 76, 1 ad 5; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 372). Shortly before, in unison with Aristotelian terminology, St. Thomas had declared that man and the soul are not identical. However, the doctrine of St. Augustine on the thesis that the being of the soul becomes the being of the whole composite eventually prevailed over the terminology of Aristotle—as Hertling has pointed out.

2) *Spiritual soul and its vital powers.* St. Thomas is an adroit advocate of the unity of the soul; there are no parts to the soul and there are not several forms, as other Scholastics dependent upon St. Augustine had previously taught. One and the same form bestows upon one and the same individual at one and the same time corporeity, life, and the light of reason. The spiritual soul takes over the activities and the faculties of the vital soul. These are virtually sublimated in it; that is, they are elevated *virtualiter* in it. "There is no other substantial form in man besides the intellectual soul; and the soul, as it virtually contains the sensitive and nutritive souls, so does it virtually contain all inferior forms" (S. T., I, 76, 4; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 377).

We are able to substantiate this assumption by resorting to experience. When we compare inanimate bodies with the plant and the animal worlds, we become aware of an ascending scale of perfection. In this scale the higher forms contain and also replace both the lower forms and their activities. Although they themselves are not inferior forms, they are capable of executing whatever functions these others are able to perform, for "the nobler a form is, the more it rises above corporeal matter, the less it is merged in matter, and

the more it excels matter by its power and operation" (S. T., I, 76, 1; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 372). By this statement St. Thomas anticipated the entirely modern concept of "superformation," with the minor qualification that, unlike M. Scheler and N. Hartmann, he recognized in the higher categories not weaker but stronger being. By so doing he gives us to understand that he is directly using a Neo-Platonism and indirectly Platonic idealism, for only on such an assumption does the doctrine of greater strength present in the higher categories receive meaning and power.

### 3. THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL

**Real distinction between the soul and its powers.** In spite of stressing repeatedly the unity of the soul, St. Thomas nevertheless favors a certain differentiation in it. He introduces this by positing a real distinction between the potencies of the soul and its substance. Whereas St. Augustine was ever ready to admit that the soul itself enters into a direct contact, partly with the objects that it knows or seeks, partly with the life of other souls, St. Thomas is more prudent and interposes the faculties of the soul between its substance and its operations. These faculties are those which, conceived as knowing and seeking, enter into contact with the external world and establish a relationship between it and the soul. This fits in with his opinion that we are able to know substances only by means of their accidents.

**Genera.** Along with Aristotle and Avicenna, St. Thomas distinguishes five fundamental kinds (*genera*) of powers in the soul (S. T., I, 78, 1). These are the *vegetative*, which is concerned exclusively with life and is present in plants; the *sensitive*, which appears among the higher forms of life, first of all in animals, and is concerned with sense perception (to it belong the five external senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch and the four internal senses of common sense, phantasy or imagination, the *vis aestimativa* or power to reach sensory judgments, and sensible memory); the *appetitive*, which signifies the instinctive conative tendencies both in animals and men; the *locomotive* (*genus motivum secundum locum*), by which we understand arbitrary local motion among the higher animals and men; and the *intellectual*, the purely rational powers of reasoning and free will found only in men.

### 4. PSYCHOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

**Primacy of knowledge.** St. Thomas paid special attention to the

psychology of knowing. In agreement with Aristotle he is of the opinion that reason is the most perfect power of man's soul and by that he accords the intellect a primacy over the will. We can in a sense speak of a certain intellectualism in St. Thomas (*S. T.*, I, 82, 3). This must be viewed, however, only from a psychological standpoint, insofar as the object of knowledge, by reason of its abstract ideal being, is simpler and consequently ranks higher according to Neo-Platonic speculation. In ethical associations, however, in which it is important to make use of a still higher value than the human intellect, e.g., God, the will is considered to be more important.

**Acts of knowing.** 1) *Species sensibilis.* As a result of this special appraisal of knowledge and of knowing, we can well realize that St. Thomas analyzed psychologically the genesis of knowledge in a very thorough manner (*S. T.*, I, 79 and 84-88). In the fully completed act by which we arrive at knowledge, we can distinguish four stages. The beginning is in sense perception. Here a clear picture is given us of the various sensory powers of the soul. What a man knows, even his spiritual knowledge of which no phantasms can be formed, he knows only through the senses. In fact, self-knowledge of the soul is possible only in regard to its own acts. These in turn are possible only by means of the external sensible world. St. Thomas manifests his perfect agreement with the proposition of Aristotle that the soul cannot know anything without phantasms; and he shows by means of concrete examples how we always begin with representations of the phantasy or imagination or press into service sensible demonstrations while reasoning, even when we speculate on the most sublime realities, such as God or the pure spirits (*S. T.*, I, 84, 6 and 7). We have already mentioned that the phantasms are nevertheless only concomitant phenomena and do not form the specific essence of reasoning. The opinion that the specific effect of our intellection is a materially realized essense (*S. T.*, I, 84, 7) is more Stoic than Aristotelian, for it was the Stoics who set up the equation: reality = *res naturae* = material things.

2) *Species intelligibilis.* The product of sense perception, the sensible species (*species sensibilis*), is "illuminated" in the second stage by the agent or active intellect (*intellectus agens*). This illumination enables the human mind to draw from the various sensory and concrete representations of external objects an intelligible content, universal in nature, of the same realities. The representations thus formed are the universals, the concepts, the essences. They are "spirit-

ual," that is, of an immaterial nature (*species intelligibilis*); in other words, they are no longer sensory. St. Thomas speaks of a "picking out" of these ideal forms of essences, of an "abstraction." Since this illumination in the meaning of the Aristotelian notion of light is drawn from *De Anima*, III, 5, where Aristotle discusses how colors become visible by means of light, hence of an object that is already completed and must itself illuminate, we can readily understand that this mediaeval abstraction is an intuition, not a formulation, of the essence. That is to say, latent eternal forms, according to St. Thomas, are made actually visible by the agent intellect; whereas in Locke, on the contrary, universal representations are newly generated in the abstraction based on sense perception. These universal representations of Locke contain nothing less than eternal forms, but they can be construed in one way or another according to experience. Their relation to transcendental reality is extremely doubtful, so that what we finally know is the representation and not the thing represented, whereas in St. Thomas there is no danger that the intellect understands only itself. To him sense data is not, as it will be for Locke, the efficient cause but only the material cause of knowledge.

Despite his earnest defense of the value of sense perception, St. Thomas does not actually accord it any more importance than does Plato himself or St. Augustine. The citation in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 84, 6), that according to Plato the corporeal sense organs are not employed is historically false, for Plato expressly assures us that we use our senses. The decisive element lies in the agent (active) intellect and it must make its decision known. The reason is that, according to the Thomistic concept of causality, the cause as the act is prior to the potency and therefore must contain whatever must be actualized in the effect. Through the agent intellect (*intellectus agens*) St. Thomas introduced an *apriori* element into his theory of knowledge. When he perceived in the illumination, considered in its relation to the Aristotelian *intellectus agens*, a certain participation in the Uncreated Light of St. Augustine, this participation is not to be considered simply a simple matter of words or of literary pleasantry, but must be thought of as based on the profundity of the subject itself. Despite the novel interpretation of the Augustinian theory which results proximately from this, St. Thomas does actually approach closely to the mind of the Father of the Church.

3) *Species impressa*. The next stage in the genesis of knowledge consists in this, that the *species intelligibilis* is received by the intellect,

St. Thomas distinguished, by a specifically real distinction, between the agent or active intellect and the possible or passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*), which maintains itself passively and must be described as a bare tablet. Aristotle himself acknowledged a "suffering" (passive) intellect and permits the truth to be impressed and imprinted upon it. To that same extent the intellectual images are also to St. Thomas *species impressae*.

4) *Species expressa*. This stage does not conclude the genesis of knowledge. The possible intellect enfolds a certain activity of its own by relating in an intentional way the impressed spiritual images to their real objects. He conceives these, so to speak, as means of expression and as words with which the intellect reproduces the world. As a result, the *species intelligibilis* is called *verbum mentis*, the word of the mind (S. C. G., IV, 11 and 13) or *species expressa*. This latter becomes a favored expression among the Thomists.

## 5. ORIGIN OF THE SOUL

**Creationism.** In regard to the origin of the soul, St. Thomas is opposed to both traducianism and generationism. Because of the subsistence of the soul we must reject such views. If the soul in its essence is independent of the body, it cannot have its origin in matter. There can be only one other alternative, namely, that God created each one and gave each one its own proper individuality; for pre-existence does not enter into the question (S. C. G., II, 83, 86).

**Embryonic development.** The single steps in the origin of a human individual are the following: the starting point is uterine blood; this is inanimate but is capable of animation. Through the action of a series of factors—God, the celestial spirits, the heavenly bodies especially the sun, the father, and the paternal sperma—the maternal blood becomes a living being, but a living being only insofar as existence is concerned and not activity (*vivum actu primo*). This act remains on the level of vegetative life without belonging to any determined species of plant life (but also not to human life), and without being possessed of vital activity (*vivum actu secundo*). Only later does it manifest life functions such as nourishment and growth. When this living being has matured to the point where it becomes capable of animal life, the hitherto present principle of life is replaced by a higher form, the animal, at first only so far as being is concerned; afterwards it exercises a corresponding activity (sense per-

ception and movement). Again it does not belong to a specific animal species and it is still not human, but it is essentially animal as such. Finally, when by maturation the embryo itself has grown to human stature—this under the influence of the sperm which, according to St. Thomas, is enclosed in the womb and causally determines the development of the embryo—the animal soul must give way to the human rational soul which is especially created for this fetus and is finally bestowed upon it. Only then does the fetus belong to the species, man, but again at first only insofar as existence is concerned (*homo actu primo*), so that at first it only performs actions that are of a vegetative and sensitive kind. It is when the child reaches the age of reason that it becomes a human being capable of carrying out human activity (*homo actu secundo*) (S. C. G., II, 89). (Consult A. Mitterer, *Mann und Weib nach dem biologischen Weltbild des hl. Thomas und dem der Gegenwart*, 1933.)

**Heredity.** On the basis of this theory, St. Thomas was in a position to do justice to the facts of hereditary transmission, which appeared to create some difficulties for the theory of creationism. For we see that the soul, which is here the form of the body, does not first inform an entirely uninformed matter, but matter that has been predisposed, namely, on the one hand by the mother's blood and on the other by the sperm of the father. God creates the soul for a particular body (*In Rom.*, v, 2). Aristotle also teaches that just as every art has its special tools, so every soul has its particular body (*De Anima*, I, 3; 407 b 25).

## MORALITY

“Nowhere did Thomas manifest his talent for systematization in so brilliant a fashion as he did in the field of ethics,” declares M. Baumgartner. On this subject Aquinas had rich material on which to work. There is practically no single thought in the whole *Nicomachean Ethics* that he did not turn to good account. But despite this association, “the ethics of the Scholastics,” as Wittman states, “represents an entirely new phenomenon.” In addition to Aristotle, St. Thomas made use of the Stoics, St. Augustine, and the Patristic age, especially of Christianity and Scholasticism before his time, for example, the *Summa de Bono* of Chancellor Philipp, the *Summa de Virtutibus et Vitiis*, and the ethics of his own teacher, Master Albert.

His ethics centers on the notion of *bonum* or the good. *Bonum* manifests a double relationship: one, ontological and one, personal. In both references it is an ethical principle.

### 1. BEING AND VALUE

**Ens et bonum convertuntur.** First of all, *bonum* appears together with being. Actually it is positively identical with it: *ens et bonum convertuntur*. *Bonum*, however, adds a special and distinct nuance to being: the relation of being to a purpose or goal and the possibility of attaining to it (see *De Ver.*, 21, 1). Originating in Plato and in Aristotle and dominating the entire history of Scholasticism—in particular the philosophy of St. Thomas—is a metaphysics completely teleological. According to it, every form or *eidos* embraces within itself final, purposive relationships (nature = that into which something has developed;  $\phi\gamma\sigma\iota s = \pi\epsilon\phi\gamma\kappa\epsilon\nu\alpha i \tau\nu\iota$ ). As a result the form becomes an entelechy and the actualization of the form a perfection and thus a *bonum*. The ontological good is always a perfection (*De Ver.*, 21, 1 and 2). For this reason Plato held that idea of ideas is also the idea of the good. There is in Aristotle—particularly in the first chapter of his *Nicomachean Ethics*—a systematic subordination of all activities and all actions to a supreme end or purpose as to the Supreme Good. In St. Augustine, for whom all forms and all ends are identical with the ideas in the mind of God, God is the good of every good (*bonum omnis boni*), and the same theme is found in Boethius and even more so in Pseudo-Dionysius. Consequently St. Thomas, employing Aristotelian formulas, saw the specific virtues and value of every being in the completion of its specific nature and of its activities. "The goodness of a thing consists in its being well disposed according to the mode of its nature" (*S. T.*, I-II, 71, 1; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 897; *S. C. G.*, I, 37; *De Virt. in Com.*, I, 9).

**Human goodness.** Since each human being possesses a specific nature and since a specific activity (*agere*) belongs to his mode of existence (*esse*), human goodness (the  $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\nu\nu\alpha \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\alpha\nu$  of Aristotle) is to be found in the fact that each individual human being is and acts in a manner conformable to the essence and the idea of a man, a human being. From this it follows that universal human nature is the ontological principle of morality. This is neither materialism nor naturalism nor a mere morality of possessions. Antiquity had recognized ideal human nature, and for St. Thomas—who draws

ideas from the mind of God as does St. Augustine—this concept of ideal human nature is more than ever dominant: "Every nature, as such, is from God; and is a vicious nature, insofar as it fails from the Divine art whereby it was made" (*S. T.*, I-II, 71, 2 ad 4; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 898). And when he repeatedly stresses the fact that human nature should act according to reason, he means the same thing; for through reason we overcome the sensitive appetites in us and we more truly fulfill the ideal order. *Recta ratio* is here nothing more than conscience, as the Stoics had already intimated. As a consequence, the natural law as a principle of human morality is subordinated to a still more sublime principle, the eternal law. Our human nature insofar as it is rational participates in it (*S. T.*, I-II, 91, 2). This is a theonomic morality, but not in the sense of a heteronomy; in fact it is as little heteronomic as was the Platonic notion of the good.

**God and the good.** Just as Plato was able to subordinate the laws of morality to the notion of imitation of God, so in his ethics St. Thomas was able to recognize the movement of rational creatures toward God. In this connection God is neither a strange God of sheer caprice nor is He superimposed on all values as a modern Kantian idea by which we are generally not aware how it is or why, but He is the Being through whom we become that which we are; He is our being and our goal.

## 2. PERSONAL "BONUM"

Since Kant has portrayed moral value as something originally personal, as something commanding respect in contrast to the expedient and pleasurable, and since he has delineated the categorical imperative as something underived, we might possibly be inclined to see in the Scholastic basis of ethics, that is, in being and in God as the ultimate foundation of being, a mistaken notion of what is specifically moral. By looking at it in this light we would err about the state of the case. Placing the foundation of morality in being and in God is metaphysics and is concerned with the *raison d'être* and not with the phenomenology of morality and the first consciousness of its principles in the order of knowledge or the *ratio cognoscendi*.

**Habitus principiorum.** 1) *Ethical apriorism.* This aspect is treated in another connection, namely, in the doctrine of the *habitus principiorum* or the virtue of first principles. By such a doctrine St.

Thomas hits precisely on that which Kant intended by the under-  
vatedness of his categorical imperative, and that which the philosophy  
of value purposes by the apriority of its values. Just as in the theoretical  
order there are primary axioms which are self-evident, the supreme  
laws of reason, so in the field of morality there are such "principles."  
These are genuine principles, that is, original, primary, and incapable  
of further derivation. They are to be found in human nature or more  
precisely in reason and its rightness; they are connatural and im-  
pressed upon it; they are known to all men and represent a participa-  
tion in the value and the veracity of God Himself (*S. T.*, I-II, 92, 2;  
93, 2; 91, 2). Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and especially St. Augustine  
continue to exert their influence in this ideology and this terminology  
of the "natural law." St. Thomas defines this law as "the participation  
of the eternal law in the rational creature" (*S. T.*, I-II, 91, 2).

2) "*Natural law of morality.*" Another expression for the primordial  
natural consciousness of value is the concept of synderesis which was  
discussed by the Scholastics and chiefly by Chancellor Philipp, as  
well as the concept of the "sparklet of the soul" (*scintilla animae*),  
current among the mystics. The supreme axiom of ethics is "Do  
good and avoid evil." If these principles are applied to individual  
concrete cases, synderesis becomes conscience (*ratio recta*). Considered  
from a strictly philosophical standpoint, conscience has always been  
an ethical apriorism. The chief indications which are granted us to  
discover the human *bonum* are the primary, essential tendencies of  
human nature (*naturales inclinationes*), which are partly vital, partly  
rational-moral judgments. This might be true at least in theory.  
Practically matters are otherwise. It is evident that St. Thomas, for  
whom the contents of the laws of natural morality coincided with  
the Decalogue, had discovered through Revelation what must be  
ascribed to the moral law, insofar as its contents are concerned. From  
this and in this way he was able to build up the concept of the  
"ideal human nature."

**The ideal human type.** Pondering these thoughts from a philo-  
sophical standpoint and not apriori, we do know what belongs to  
such a notion. Ideal human nature, considered only as being, is an  
apriori and the actions performed in conformity with it are "derived"  
from it. In the order of knowledge, on the contrary, we are constantly  
tending toward it and only gradually do we discover the contents of an  
ideal human type, and only gradually do we perceive its reality. But  
we do not start out aimlessly on our journey. We possess in our reason

a criterion of good and evil, which in every situation "on principle" repeats ever anew what is in conformity with the law of nature and what is not (*S. T.*, I-II, 94, 2 and 3), with an immediacy that is final in the cognitional order and incapable of "being derived," and with a categorical directness. Reason thereby declares what is the ideal type which we should seek to realize in our own life. Since there are ideas of every particular and of every individual there must be also ideas of all particulars and of all individuals (*S. T.*, I, 14, 11; 15, 3 and 4; *De Ver.*, III, 8). At this point Eckhart could begin to develop his theory of the archetypal *ego*.

**Doctrine of virtue as a doctrine of value.** In his teaching on virtue, to which the Second Part of the Second Part of the *Summa Theologiae* is devoted, St. Thomas traces the ideal figure of man in such a way that both the scholar and the saint in him are revealed. In his teaching on virtue we can today decipher a doctrine of value which is presented phenomenologically. The virtues of the human heart which are portrayed there permit the vocation and the greatness of man to become visible; these open the way for every individual to become the kind of a personality that deserves "respect." On this point Aristotle is again scrutinized and again weighed in the balance, that is, his doctrine of virtue as propounded in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

**Free will.** A fundamental assumption on which the whole of Thomistic ethics is based—which leaves nothing further to be expected—is the doctrine of free will. St. Thomas recognized that this gift was in no sense endangered either by the eternal law or by the providence of God, just as had Boethius and St. Augustine. The solution of the problem of how freedom can exist in the presence of law is resolved as it was by Boethius. Only in beings beneath men, in natures that are subhuman, do the eternal exemplars supply the innermost reasons for the movement of things, hence necessarily and always uniformly. In the case of man the eternal law takes on the aspect of a rule or of a command, which does not result in any physical necessity in matters of unconditional ethical import (*S. T.*, I-II, 93, 5 and 6; *S. C. G.*, III, 73).

**Human acts.** St. Thomas speaks in his teaching on personal acts (*S. T.*, I-II, 6-58) of the gradations of freedom in concrete practical life, of the influence of circumstances, of motives and motivation, of yearning and satisfaction, of purpose, of sentiment and assent, of the choice of means and ways, of accomplishments and completion, of the schooling of the will and its mastery (the teaching: "A com-

mand is nothing else than the act of reason directing, with a certain motion, something to act" [S. T., I-II, 17, 5; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 658] forms the content of a very well-known school of character formation [training of the will] at the present time), of the subjective and objective elements in the make-up of moral actions. This section offers a profound psychological and moral-pedagogical analysis of concrete moral life. The emotions are treated thoroughly also in this section (S. T., I-II, 22 ff.).

### 3. ETERNAL BLISS

In conformity with Greek and Christian tradition, for St. Thomas the climax of ethics is to be found in the doctrine of eternal bliss (S. T., I-II, 1-5). Antiquity and the Middle Ages understood the life of man in terms of teleology or finality. True wisdom, both for the Academicians and for the Peripatetics, for the Stoics as well as for the Christians, was to be found in a life that tends toward a goal, in a knowledge of it, and of the subordination of all actions to it. The attainment of the goal results in peace and enjoyment: "We are leisureless only to attain leisure," as Aristotle had phrased it, and we exercise our powers (*uti*) for the sake of enjoyment (*frui*) as St. Augustine had maintained. In his treatment of eternal bliss, St. Thomas again employs the terminology of Aristotle. He recognizes eternal bliss in the perfect *θεωρία*, that is, in the vision of God.

**The vision of God.** As Aristotle sought the supreme bliss of man in the intuition of the truth, in the Thought of Thought, so in a similar fashion St. Thomas also discovers it: "The last and perfect happiness, which we await in the life to come, consists entirely in contemplation . . . and the essence of happiness consists in an act of the intellect" (S. T., I-II, 3, 4, and 5; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 598). This is again Thomistic intellectualism. Whereas for Aristotle perfect bliss reaches its perfection here on earth, St. Thomas as a Christian transfers it to the life beyond the grave. Here again Augustinian theory finds expression.

**Fruitio.** Although in the identification of eternal bliss with the contemplation of truth (*θεωρία τῆς ἀληθείας*) there is contained a proposition of St. Augustine who held that this bliss is perfected in charity, the matter is viewed in a typical Augustinian fashion if the vision of God is designated as perfect delight. Even though this is only a secondary element (S. T., I-II, 4, 1), the Augustinian *frui* is again utilized (S. T., I-II, 4, 3).

**Eudaemonism?** By such a theory the morality of Aquinas ends in eudaemonism, just as it had begun with it (the idea of purpose). Nevertheless, his moral doctrine is as little eudaemonistic as had been the ethics of Plato and Aristotle. For nowhere in it does subjective inclination play a decisive role. All principles are of an existential objective kind. As had frequently been the case with the ancient moralists, so also with him the eudaemonistic terminology is only a vehicle for other incomparably higher values, namely, ethical values in themselves.

## LAW AND THE STATE

In connection with his teaching on the natural and the eternal law St. Thomas discussed human law (purpose, origin, characteristics, and division), its power, its binding force, and its development (*S. T.*, I-II, 95-97).

### 1. LAW

**Meaning of law.** Why do men make laws? St. Thomas pondered the matter as follows: In human nature much power is latent. This must be directed into proper channels, and it needs in addition a certain discipline; for man is easily inclined to act out of caprice or from inordinate desire. For the young, parental authority suffices. For the upstart as well as for the inconsiderate and the vicious, in order to guide them along the proper paths, external compulsion must be exercised by threats and the consequent fear of punishment, so that in the end they will of their own free will and from the force of habit do that which in the beginning they were forced to do because of the power of the state. With law, and here St. Thomas quotes from Aristotle, man is a truly noble being; without it, a veritable beast. Although St. Thomas very clearly saw that there is a definite relation between law and power, he does not equate law simply with power. In addition he recognized the concept of order. Because of it he makes a direct reference to human reason. In it we have the weapons we can use against concupiscence and savagery. In such a view we can also see in what source all laws are anchored.

**Source of law.** Since ancient times, reason, if it is endowed with sanity, leads man to a cosmic law and to the natural order. This had been true of the Stoics by whom the Roman jurisprudence had been so greatly influenced. So also here. Every human law, if it is truly

just and not merely a coercive measure, must be derived from the natural law—thus runs the thesis of Aquinas—for the natural law is the first law of reason (S. T., I-II, 95, 2). Positive human law, according to St. Thomas, is an interpretation of the natural law. The eternal laws which for men are embedded in the metaphysical order of the world should be given fitting expression and be brought to full development. In this way man will be led to the discovery of his true being and essence and will be guided in the proper conduct of his life. We have already shown in what the natural law consists.

**Natural law and natural right.** The natural law is revealed to us by the natural inclinations, which are partially vital natural tendencies and partially spiritual-moral appraisals of value, and is formulated and obtrudes itself on our consciousness by means of the *habitus principiorum* and practical conscience (*ratio practica*). The most important as well as the most fundamental precepts or postulates which result from these considerations comprise “the natural law.” St. Thomas outlined its content in bold lines in the *Summa Theologiae* (I-II, 94, 2) (compare this with the extensive study in H. Meyer, *Thomas von Aquin*, p. 525 ff.; in the English translation [F. Eckhoff], pp. 464–511). He is fully aware that the natural law, at least in its most general or universal principles, is well established for men; it is not, however, in its particular applications (the particular individual precept or postulate). For in these particular instances there are always complications and difficulties which arise as result of peculiar circumstances of life (S. T., I-II, 94, 4). To the degree in which the natural law, insofar as being is concerned, represents an accomplished ideal order of timeless validity, to the same degree does that same law, insofar as our knowledge of it goes, signify constantly reiterated tasks which mankind has in some fashion or another to fulfill here on earth. According to St. Thomas, this law is less a codification of completed and perfected provisos than it is a corrective far surpassing all specific formulation, which, as a participation in uncreated light, permits judgments to be formed on all human legislation that has been enacted in time, and in accordance with its comprehension is permitted to share in the truth of the eternal law. Much more important than the occasional actual legal axioms which have been formulated and in which man can err—even St. Thomas on occasion erred, for example, in his underestimation of women—is the divine spark indwelling within us, by which we can continuously rise above our own works, namely, the *habitus principiorum*.

**The properties of law.** That St. Thomas sought to prevent laws from becoming unhistorically frozen and that he was prepared to discover them in the development of history is demonstrated by his thoughts on the properties of laws, which he develops in dependence on Isidore of Seville (*S. T.*, I-II, 95, 3). According to his explanation, positive law must be just (corresponding to the natural law), moral, physically possible, true to traditions of the people, adapted both to time and to place, necessary, purposive, promulgated, and conducive to the common welfare (or good). For this reason his definition of law runs as follows: "A law is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community and promulgated" (*S. T.*, I-II, 90, 4; ed. Benziger, Vol. I, p. 995).

## 2. THE STATE

**Origin of the state.** In his political philosophy, St. Thomas makes Scholasticism acquainted for the first time with Aristotelian politics in the translation of William of Moerbeke. As a consequence, he complemented the Augustinian social theory that had been predominant up to that time. According to C. Baeumker, "No one had as great an influence on the acceptance of Aristotelian sociology as did St. Thomas." The chief features of this philosophy are delineated for us in his *Commentary on the Politics* and in his *De Reginime Principum* (which is authentic only up to II, 4). According to St. Thomas, the origin of the state is to be found in the very nature of man himself. Man is by nature a social being, as Aristotle had phrased it. In isolation he would never have been able to cope with life, for nature did not equip him with as many and dependable instincts as it had the animals. He must succor himself by reason. This he can best do in a community in which all are united in a common bond by their intentions and by their inventions, in regard to those things that are necessary and useful; and each member must contribute his share to the greatest possible perfection of the whole. In the case of a common purpose or end, a common order becomes necessary and this is rooted in the collective groups, beginning with the families and rising to the municipality, to the tribe, to the state. Even language, as Aristotle had said, points to the homogeneous solidarity of the human race.

**Kinds of states.** St. Thomas accepts as a matter of course the traditional theories in reference to the various forms of the state.

He personally considered that the best form was a monarchy, but he agreed with Aristotle that a certain medley, a distinct mingling of several types, would be beneficial, to avoid narrowness and partiality; thus, for example, a state with aristocratic and democratic elements. The most despicable form of the state is a tyranny. But St. Thomas would not permit a tyrant to be put to death (*De Reginime Principum*, I, 6). The means which he suggests to put down tyranny and to check its evils indicate that he still lived in a golden age in which a tyrant was a nuisance indeed, but in which men could still be men. The conditions which modern times have begotten in this respect were unknown to St. Thomas. As a consequence, he could not do justice to them when he weighed the concept for his contemporaries and for his own age.

**The purpose of the state.** The purpose of the state was for him as it had been in antiquity: citizens should be guided by the state to lead happy and virtuous lives. To attain such an ideal, peace is especially necessary, hence the goal that St. Augustine had listed among the chief tasks of the state. The supreme purpose of the state—here the Christian and the theologian in St. Thomas find expression—is to promote the eternal welfare, the ultimate end of man, his bliss in the presence of God. The state has not only material but also supernatural purposes and may not prevent its citizens in any way from pursuing them, but should, on the contrary, place itself in their service directly by fostering a conduct of life based on religion.

**State and Church.** Since St. Thomas recognized only one religion, the Christian faith, he necessarily could acknowledge only one Supreme Master, Jesus Christ. From this he derived the supremacy of the Church over the state. In all respects his thoughts were permeated by a teleological cast. After the ultimate goal of man's life has been established, and after it has further been conceded by means of faith that the custodians of the economy of salvation are the Church and its visible head the Pope, the latter as the representative of Christ, everything must be weighed and stated on a teleological basis. But precisely because he did pass judgment on teleological premises, he concluded that the Church does not possess an absolute supremacy over the state, for example, in purely secular affairs, but only a so-called indirect supremacy (*potestas indirecta in temporalibus*). Only insofar as the temporal order is brought into contact with the supernatural order, does the supernatural order

furnish it with standards, directives, and concepts. In this fashion St. Thomas was interpreted by his pupil, Remigio de Girolami, the teacher of Dante, and at the end of the Middle Ages by Cardinal Juan de Torquemada.

**International law.** We again meet the concept of order which St. Thomas favored in his treatises on the law of nations (international law). St. Thomas recognized a *ius gentium*. There are fundamental principles which appear to reason as being necessary for the existence of a family of nations and of states, principles which we are accustomed to observe in the affairs of all nations. Thus, for example, ambassadors are considered to be inviolable; treaties must be observed by the pact nations; in war, women, children, and in general non-combatants must be spared and protected. Basically it is the natural law which supplies the outlines for international law. Since according to St. Thomas law is not only a matter of power but essentially an ordination of reason (*S. T.*, I-II, 91, 2 ad 3; 90, 4), he was able successfully on the one hand to refute the oft-alleged objection that behind international law no force can be found to enforce its provisions, and consequently it is not a law in any sense, and on the other hand that it is formless. The basic concepts of international law formulated by St. Thomas were taken up and more fully developed by Francis Vittoria and by Suarez. By means of these two, St. Thomas' influence was exercised also over the classicist of international law, Hugo Grotius.

## THE REACTION TO THOMISTIC ARISTOTELIANISM

### 1. THE FRANCISCANS

The special features of Thomistic Aristotelianism — namely, the unity of the substantial forms, the identity of spiritual substances with the forms alone exclusive of matter, the possibility of eternal creation, the real distinction between essence and existence in created beings, the primacy of the intellect, the dependence of intellectual knowledge on sense perception and sense experience — evoked violent opposition both during St. Thomas' lifetime and after his death. Manifestations of this tendency are evident in the Franciscan school. Cardinal Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302), the pupil of St. Bonaventure, proposed a theory of knowledge which was directed with special sharpness against St. Thomas. Aquinas was attacked even

more formidably by John Peckham (d. 1292). When this friar became an archbishop, he publicly condemned several Thomistic propositions. William de la Mare composed a *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, and in 1282 the Franciscans issued a manifesto forbidding St. Thomas to be read without having this *Purgatorium* ready at hand as a corrective for his ideas.

## 2. HENRY OF GHENT

Among the professors drawn from the ranks of the secular clergy at the University of Paris, there was also much opposition to St. Thomas. Henry of Ghent (d. 1293), one of the most renowned theologians of his age, criticized Aquinas for many of his opinions, for example, the real distinction between essence and existence, his concept of matter, his view on a possible eternal creation, his theory of knowledge, his notion of conscience, and his intellectualism.

## 3. ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES

Weighing heavily against St. Thomas was the fact that leading figures of the ecclesiastical hierarchy turned against him and his supposed novelties. Among the propositions of Latin Averroism that were condemned by Archbishop Stephen Tempier of Paris in 1277 we find seven from St. Thomas. At approximately the same time, Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was himself a Dominican and provincial of the Order, inserted certain opinions of his confrere Thomas among the teachings condemned by the Church.

## 4. MISUNDERSTANDINGS

If because of these condemnations we should hold that Thomistic Aristotelianism was un-Christian and precisely because of this character was to be assailed, we would be guilty of a woeful misunderstanding. His Aristotelianism was entirely different from that of Averroës. His adversaries contended that his Aristotelianism was not sufficiently Aristotelian. In the discussions that followed, the various schools were severely perturbed by the terminology he employed, as is usual in polemics, even of a scientific kind. A study of St. Thomas entirely divorced from the period which would concern itself only with the facts of the case and would consider the question more realistically and profoundly, could easily ascertain that St. Augustine influenced him more than did Aristotle, not insofar as his formulas or his terminology are concerned, but rather in regard to the facts and

fundamental doctrines he advocated. E. Gilson once wrote that Thomistic Aristotelianism would have been the first and the sole modernization ever to succeed in gaining a foothold for itself in the whole history of the Church. But we have reason to believe that it did not succeed, because it did not have to succeed. St. Thomas was much too profound a thinker to have incorporated only incidentally and unconnectedly the idealistic elements of Neo-Platonism and St. Augustine, of which there are not a few traces in his works, if he actually did adopt an entirely different philosophical attitude in conformity with his Aristotelian "realism." St. Thomas must have seen intuitively that at which we have been able to arrive only on the basis of tedious historical research, namely, the knowledge that Aristotle was the first Greek who taught us to view the world with the eyes of Plato. For this reason he was able, without further ado, to speak the language of the new philosophy, for the speaking of which he may have appeared to defer to the custom of his time; but he was, at the same time, able to stand upon the ancient ground of Christian Platonism. He was also able to carry on an effective polemic against Plato. Aristotle had done the same despite the fact that he himself remained the first Platonist. In any case, time succeeded in accomplishing something that it has so frequently done in the past: namely, to obliterate the prohibitions and the condemnations that had been leveled against St. Thomas. The cause of St. Thomas was more enduring than the errors of history. He found more enthusiastic pupils and defenders than he did opponents. In the subsequent half century, Dante located him in Paradise; at the end of the thirteenth century, the General Chapter of the Dominican Order proclaimed him *Doctor ordinis*; in 1323 he was canonized; and in 1879, Pope Leo XIII counseled that his philosophy become the philosophy of the Church.

##### 5. THE SCHOOL OF THOMISTS

Of this school we must recount the names of Reginald of Piperno, the guardian of his literary heritage; John Quidort of Paris (d. 1306); John Regina of Naples (d. after 1336); Ptolemy of Lucca (d. 1327); Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323); Thomas Sutton (after 1350); John Capreolus (d. 1444), the *princeps Thomistarum* as he is called; Francis Vittoria (d. 1546); Dominic Soto (d. 1560); Melchior Cano (d. 1560); Cardinal Cajetan (d. 1534).

# CHAPTER 21

## FROM THE AVERROISTS TO MASTER ECKHART

### I. THE FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS AND THE AVERROISTS

#### THE OTHER ARISTOTLE

##### 1. CHARACTER OF FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS

In the liberal arts faculty we have that department of the university in which philosophy could *ex professo* exist in congenial surroundings. Members of this faculty wished to be philosophers only; they touched upon theological problems only incidentally. They were able fairly roughly to sketch the peculiar fixity of "natural" philosophy. Above all else, they devoted themselves to the task of explaining and of developing the thoughts of Aristotle. Grabmann has outlined how scientific life took shape on this faculty of liberal arts during the first half of the thirteenth century by drawing on an Aragonese manuscript of an anonymous author. According to this authority, the peculiar field of activity was rational philosophy. Comprised under this heading we find metaphysics (*philosophia naturalis*), mathematics (*Quadrivium*), and *philosophia rationalis* in a narrower sense (*Trivium*), as well as moral philosophy, in which use was made of the first three books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*ethica nova et vetus*). The other standard works were the *Timaeus* and the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius. Special emphasis was placed on the subjects of the *Trivium*: logic, dialectics, grammar, and the philosophy of language.

##### 2. THE FIRST LOGICIANS

William of Shyreswood, professor at Oxford and Paris (d. c. 1249), Lambert of Auxerre (d. c. 1250), Nicholas of Paris, and especially

Peter of Spain, who became Pope in 1276 (John XXI, d. 1277) are the first on the list of famous *magistri*. From the last named stemmed the *Summulae logicales*, which was the textbook for logic during the Middle Ages. These *Summulae* were a digest of the *logica vetus et nova* of Aristotle. Distinctly formalistic in arrangement, they were intended to offer a specific manual of dialectics which in conformity with the example of Aristotelian *Topics* and *Elenctics* (indirect modes of proof) would describe and teach all forms and artifices embodied in the art of dialectical fencing. This text enjoyed great prestige, and commentaries on it exist without number. After the dialectics of Scholasticism had fallen into disrepute, logistics recently discovered that behind the formalism of its terminology there existed an immense store of wealth of which the subsequent ages had not dreamed. (For the study of mediaeval logic the reader might consult with profit the basic researches of M. Grabmann in the *Abhandlungen der Münchener und Berliner Akademie*, as well as the studies of Fr. Bochenski and Fr. Boehner.)

### 3. AVERROISTS

The importance of the liberal arts faculty increased appreciably when in the middle of the thirteenth century the Averroists entered into the purview of the Scholastics. The old masters had engaged essentially in philosophical propaedeutics (preparatory instruction). With the introduction of this new source, the whole philosophy of realism became the focal point and this realism was again that of Aristotle. This time, however, it was of a pure Aristotle who had been judged previously on theological grounds, as was expressly emphasized. We must say though that it was not the pure, but only the Averroistic, Aristotle upon whom the masters lectured; for in the meantime, Averroës had become what Avicenna had been for a long time, namely, the *Commentator par excellence*. Philosophical recognition of him developed in Paris into an animated movement, the so-called Latin Averroism (radical or heterodox Aristotelianism). Three things stand out particularly in this novel intellectual trend: (a) the doctrine of the eternity of the world; (b) the proposition of double truth; (c) monopsychism.

**Siger of Brabant.** The soul of the movement was Siger of Brabant (1235-1248). His commentaries on Aristotle, which were found by Grabmann in Munich, show that he was one of the most important expositors of Aristotle, a man of independent judgment and of pro-

found as well as acute reasoning powers. Even his earlier known works, i.e., the tractate *De Anima Intellectiva*, are not simply paraphrases of citations but offer extensive treatment of philosophical problems. Research on Siger is still in progress, especially in connection with the chronology of his works which the investigations of Van Steenberghen have called into question. Now it appears as if Siger had revised his speculation, that is to say, as if he had changed from a radical concept of Aristotle, which was both rebellious and Averroistic, to a more moderate interpretation of him in full agreement with that of St. Thomas.

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1) *Earlier Period.* In his earlier phase, Siger struck out upon a course that was purely arbitrary. God is indeed the first being or *primum ens*; His existence is proved by the Aristotelian argument of motion, by the proposition on causality, and in addition by the Neo-Platonic proof based on the degrees of perfection. God is also the Creator of the world, but here we are dealing with eternal creation. God did not create everything; only what is inwardly and interiorly most closely connected with Him, the One. This is not true, however, in the case of matter. Matter is withdrawn from His influence and is accordingly divorced from His providence. The spheres are eternal and are moved externally by the spirits of the spheres which exist as distinct and subsistent beings (the Aristotelian relative self-movers). Living beings on earth are also eternal. There is no such thing as spontaneous generation. Living beings will also

subsist eternally. Present in his thinking are also the ever recurring ancient years of the world. Since everything is by nature and is always, it is meaningless to differentiate between essence and existence. The real distinction of St. Albert and St. Thomas is rejected.

Siger revealed his singularity most patently in his teaching on monopsychism. In conjunction with Averroës he taught that there is only one intellect for all mankind. Man becomes a human being endowed with senses through the vital soul. Only this soul is the form of the body. Universal ideas which are proper to the mind are ascribed to the one uniform intellect of mankind, which in contrast to the individual and his sense faculties is "distinct, eternal and deathless." As distinct, the soul can neither be individuated nor multiplied by matter, but must necessarily be only one. There are, as a consequence, no individual souls; there is also no individual immortality, but only the immortality of the soul of mankind. We can see here how a few citations taken from Aristotle's *De Anima*, III, 5 are quoted very precisely and further developed. If we should call to mind Klages and his statements on the sense faculties and on the intellect of man, we would discover that this mediaeval doctrine anticipated modern thought. The whole leads to far-reaching consequences. Man does not live to attain to any end beyond the grave but must see his Supreme Good in this existence, and this, in the good of the whole. The theories which Siger advanced actually were considered shocking by his contemporaries, and St. Albert as well as St. Thomas carried on a polemic against him. St. Bonaventure declared that such theories disrupted the order not only of the world but also of individual life. We can readily understand that all this inevitably led to a conflict with the Church. In 1277, Siger's theories were condemned.

2) *The revision.* In a later phase he retreated from the positions he had defended at first. In his commentary on Aristotle's treatise *De Anima*, he maintained a more reserved attitude toward the teachings of Averroës and admitted that by the assumption of only one rational soul, the individual would no longer think by himself, independently. As a consequence, we would be forced to say logically: Something thinks in him (*homo non intelligit, sed intelligitur*). Did he by this statement justify the argument that St. Thomas had employed against him? The rational soul becomes again the form of the body; it is individual and immortal. And motion itself need not be eternal any longer, but may have had a beginning. Neither

the one nor the other can be proved with certainty on purely philosophical grounds. By this concept he concurred with the standpoint defended by Aquinas. Whereas in his earlier phase he had advocated determinism, now he favors freedom of the will.

The change of viewpoint is almost too radical. We may in fact be justified in surmising that in this entire "conversion" his old theory of double truth is being applied practically — philosophy and theology are both correct, but what is true of one need not necessarily be true also of the other. Two worlds exist entirely for themselves; both are without any inner relationship one to the other, but both in their individual houses can be equally comfortable. Did he wish to do the theologians a favor by visiting them in their own home and telling them what they wished to hear, because he could not speak to them in any other way, but at the same time thought his own thoughts "philosophically"? De Wulf labeled Siger a complicated character, but held that his "conversion" was sincere.

**Boethius of Dacia.** Another *magister* who has been frequently mentioned was Boethius of Dacia. His teachings were condemned along with those of Siger in 1277. "There is no life more sublime than the philosophical," runs one of his theses; and another: "Only the philosophers are the wise men of this world," and there are several others of similar nature. In such statements we can detect an Aristotelianism that is sheer earthly paganism.

**More moderate masters.** Other masters, more moderate in their views, who followed the leadership of St. Thomas and St. Albert, were Jämes of Douay, Raoul of Brittany, Peter of Auvergne, Henry of Brussels, and in England, Simon of Faversham (d. 1306).

An Averroistic tradition had long been current in Paris. In the fourteenth century it was represented by John of Jandun and Marsilus of Padua, the author of the *Defensor Pacis*. This work, jointly with the teaching of Aristotle on the natural origin of the state, defended the autonomy of civil power over against ecclesiastical guardianship and denominated the state as the sole source of civil law.

**From Paris to Padua.** This Averroistic tradition was transplanted to Bologna (Thaddeus of Parma and Angelo of Arezzo, after 1300) and then to Padua, where it was kept alive until deep into the seventeenth century. This tradition defended Aristotle and his *Physics* against all innovations at first tenaciously and stubbornly, but later during the Renaissance it became pure natural philosophy in the modern sense, something it had always striven for.

## II. THE YOUNGER FRANCISCAN SCHOOL

## OLD AND NEW

Alongside the Aristotelianism of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas and their schools, the old Augustinian tradition lived on. Here as before the Franciscans were its chief protagonists.

## 1. FROM ST. BONAVENTURE TO SCOTUS

Until the time of Duns Scotus, who represents the apex, the time-honored heritage of the past was bequeathed to the new age by several thinkers: Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302), whose theory of knowledge merits special consideration; William de la Mare (d. 1298), whose polemic against St. Thomas we have already mentioned; Richard of Middleton (d. after 1300); Roger Marston (d. 1303), who attempted in a typical Oxonian fashion to reconcile Augustinianism with Aristotelianism; Peter John Olivi (d. 1298), who maintained that in the human soul there are three forms: the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual, of which the first two were essential forms of the body, a theory which the Council of Vienne expressly condemned in 1312; Raymond Lull (d. 1316), another Franciscan, who by his *Ars Generalis et Ultima* sought to develop a kind of mechanics of concepts which would permit all combinations of ideas to be worked out artificially, an attempt which Leibniz resuscitated in his *Ars Combinatoria*.

## 2. DUNS SCOTUS

The founder of the Younger Franciscan school was John Duns Scotus (1266-1308). Without doubt he belongs among the great geniuses of Scholasticism, even if one were to exaggerate in claiming that he created a new synthesis. In any case he developed, extensively and in all respects, the heritage that had been bequeathed him. His notions are clearer; his distinctions are more precise; his proofs more convincing; his problematic more rich than ever before. Whosoever should wish to philosophize with St. Thomas would do himself a good turn if he compared and mulled over the problems he found in his works with the notions developed by Duns Scotus. He possessed a sharp critical faculty and richly earned for himself the surname, *Doctor subtilis*. He used criticism as a means of entrenching truth more deeply and not simply for the sake of criticizing. Basically

orientated toward St. Augustine, he was also well versed in Aristotle without, however, succumbing to him completely. He was keenly interested in adjusting the differences that had arisen between Augustinism and Aristotelianism. He knew how to think independently and frequently crossed swords with tradition, especially with St. Thomas.

**Life and works.** Scotus was a professor at Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris. In 1308 he was summoned to Cologne, where he died the same year at the age of 42. His literary output was enormous, considering the shortness of his life. The most important of his writings were the logical *Quaestiones* in connection with Porphyry and Aristotle; the *Quaestiones Subtilissimae* on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle (only the first nine books are genuine); the *Quaestiones* on Aristotle's *De Anima* (probably genuine); the *Tractatus de Primo Principio* (critical edition by M. Müller, 1941); *Opus Oxoniense*; *Reportata Parisiensia*; *Quodlibeta*. A critical new edition of the works of Duns Scotus has been undertaken by P. C. Balić.

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We shall stress here the principal thoughts with which Duns Scotus enriched and further developed the then current philosophical speculation.

**Reason and faith.** The views of St. Augustine which Duns Scotus adopted become apparent to us just as soon as we examine his position in regard to the traditional teaching concerning reason and faith. Philosophical knowledge of God is more strictly delimited and the the most important elucidations of philosophical problems are taken from faith rather than from philosophy. The object of metaphysics is not God, as Averroës opined, but being as such, as Avicenna had maintained. Natural knowledge is certain only in those instances in which it can be supported by sense perception and sense experience. The world of immaterial objects, however, is removed from us and is intelligible only through aposteriori conclusions. These, however, lack sharpness and are very general. As a result, certain notions, e.g., the true, essential concept of God, are hidden from our natural reason. We can indeed define God as the Supreme Being, as the First and Infinite, but such a definition is only a confused notion. In reality God is more; He is almighty, infinite, all merciful, faithful, just, and omniscient. But these attributes can be discovered only by faith and theology.

A "Christian metaphysics" is nevertheless possible. In it the truths pertaining to God and immortality, after they have been revealed by faith, are philosophically analyzed and exhausted, as St. Anselm pointed out before. Scotus essayed the same project in his work, *Tractatus de Primo Principio*. How much Scotus actually limited the range of natural reason in metaphysical matters we can judge from the position he adopted in regard to the moral law. Whereas St. Thomas held that the entire content was rationally uniform and capable of proof, Scotus advocated the view that this holds true only of the content of the first three commandments of the Decalogue but not of the remainder. We could conceive, for example, of a

world order in which murder was permitted, polygamy sanctioned, and private property disallowed. St. Thomas maintained that because of the necessity of reason, none of the commandments admitted of change. Scotus asserted that this was true only of the first three, for any change effected in them involved an inherent contradiction, whereas the same was not true of the other seven. By such a view, these last became a matter of the divine will and no longer, as Aquinas had explained, of rational contents. Scotus was not gullible where reason was concerned; as a consequence, he was more critical of it and traced the limits of pure reason much more precisely than had ever been done before. Perhaps by doing that he hoped to restrain the totalitarian pretensions of philosophy that had been entertained by the Averroists.

**Primacy of the will.** We can now better understand how Scotus arrived at his teaching on the primacy of the will. By such a view he did not wish to show favoritism to irrationalism, nor to claim that pure will was able of itself and autonomously to be practical. Scotus saw in the will itself "a blind faculty," as St. Thomas had always maintained. He knew, furthermore, that a thing can be willed only if the intellect has singled out a purpose for it. But in the case of man, Scotus placed a greater value on the will than on reason, because love unites us more intimately with God than faith. This we can appreciate without too much difficulty from the fact that hatred of God is much more terrible than ignorance of Him. The will should furthermore be free under all circumstances. According to Scotus, nothing can determine it, not even the Supreme Good Itself. The will alone is the cause of all its actions. In a certain respect the special value he placed on the will—a value that is characteristic of Scotus—was transferred to God. The Divine Will created, positively, the multiplicity of individual ideas after which God fashioned the world. Although God knows all things in His essence, the prototypes of all things are nevertheless begotten in Him from all eternity. They are, of course, arbitrarily as little produced as is the positive moral law, because the will of God creates whatever the wisdom of God preconceives, and because again in this respect the essence of God, fully in accord with the law of contradiction, determines whether or not a given idea is possible. Scotus also incorporated Platonism into his philosophical system. We can detect in his speculation the "scrutinizing gaze toward something"—*ἀποβλέπειν πρός τι* (the ideas with which Plato portrays the creation of the world

by the divine Demiurge in a stereotyped fashion) in precisely the same fashion as we can in St. Augustine or St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure.

**Individuation.** Close to this evaluation of the will and to his at times positive judgment concerning it lies Scotus' position in regard to the problem of individuation. The particular is a "positive" entity and as such possesses a *haecceitas*, a "thisness." Knowledge of the particular is therefore most perfect knowledge in opposition to the overvaluation of the universal found in Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas. By this he lays a firm foundation for a new viewpoint—a view which will recruit for him many disciples and will become ever stronger as modern times approach more closely. If the term *haecceitas* only touches upon the problem without solving it, by it we are able to see typically for the first time in his reasoning that subject which from this time on will become a great problem of modern philosophy, individualism.

**Knowledge.** It is only logical to find that Scotus in his theory of knowledge permits concrete particular things to be known in their entirety. There is no irrational residue, nor must we approach them by a detour through the universals. By a sensory-intellectual intuition we apprehend directly the existing thing. Such knowledge, however, does not remain static, for Scotus is also intent upon universal concepts. They are "abstracted"; an *intellectus agens* takes care of this activity. He adds, however, a "common nature" (*natura communis*) which is a medium between the particular and the universal. Only from this is the *species intelligibilis* derived, i.e., the universal concept which all scientific knowledge must utilize. The activity of the *intellectus agens* in the process of knowledge is stressed in a very special way. In contrast to it sense perception is only a partial cause; the *intellectus agens*, however, is *ex se causa integra factiva obiecti in intellectu possibili*.

His achievement in this respect lies in the fact that he establishes a certain constant relation between the intellectual faculty and the object of knowledge. For this reason Scotus was better able to underline and thus stress the uniqueness of the laws which govern human knowledge than was St. Thomas who had also advocated the principle that everything that is known is known after the manner of the one knowing. The subjective element of knowledge is made much more prominent. As a consequence, truth to Scotus was no longer as it had been in the naïve theory of imitation, a

simple adequation, but "that is true which is adapted to its proportion." In this we can appreciate his critical but at the same time cautious method of procedure. Scotus knew that sense experience yields only judgments of facts. He maintained that principles are intelligible only through the intellect and its ability to grasp associations, although these may be based on erroneous sense experience, since the senses are not efficient causes as far as the intellect is concerned (*intellectus non habet sensus pro causa, sed tantum pro occasione*). In addition, he used intellectual principles to determine whether or not our judgments are true or false. All this helps us to become aware—as we already had been in the notion of a common nature, which is nothing more than a disguised universal—that the old reasoning, the idea-speculation kind, is again reasserting itself.

In Scotus, as a consequence, we find the relation between sensible reality and spiritual reality as confused as it had been in Scholasticism up to his day. Only with the English philosophers of modern times will sensible reality be treated with sufficient earnestness, that earnestness that it deserves. But we see in Scotus and still more in Ockham how the thinkers slowly but gradually approach to this development, and truly approach it. By such an observation we recognize also how modern times continuously emerge from and develop out of the Middle Ages, and not as was formerly naïvely believed, suddenly, as Athena was projected from the head of Zeus, as something novel and something *outré*.

**Univocal concept of being.** Scotus occasioned a great furor by his doctrine on the univocal nature of the concept of being in our predication concerning God. By this he did not think that any distinct categories could be predicated in a univocal sense both of God and of the world at one and the same time. And thus he admitted that the ancient theory of only analogical predication was correct. However, he maintained that that universal being which is everywhere manifest and is always recognized and is actually expressed, despite the fact that the objects themselves differ greatly one from another, must have one and the same name and one and the same concept, if there is to be any sense at all in our speaking of being. In every analogy there must always be something that is common and something that is always the same. This is a thought which the earlier philosophers never expressed. This most universal being is the *maxime scibile* and as such becomes the object of metaphysics. This being is a transcendental and is more precisely determined modally by such

designations as infinite-finite, necessary-possible, or some such similar terms. Precisely through these modalities there occur ever anew that caesura which thinkers before Scotus had posited by concepts such as super-essential being, participated being, necessary and contingent being. By such a conception the weightiest element in analogy was preserved and with it the idea of analogy itself; for we can compare things only with something that is common to many and already known, be this an idea of a modally contingent being of the most universal kind—which means the same thing.

**Proofs for the existence of God.** Scotus applied all his mental acumen to the problems involved in the arguments for the existence of God. He had early rejected the Aristotelian argument taken from motion, because the thesis on motion permitted of too many exceptions. But he did advocate the proof from efficient causality; also that from finality as well as that from sublimity (the degrees of perfection). The philosophical clarification of the notion of cause in general and of the principle of causality in particular and the impossibility of a *regressus in infinitum* which Scotus undertook here must, in every systematic presentation of these arguments for God's existence, be given due consideration. In this connection Scotus revived the proof of St. Anselm, completed it by reference to the possibility of a concept of an Infinite Being, and anticipated by it the thought of Leibniz on the same subject.

### 3. SCOTISTIC SCHOOLS

Scotus' inspiring influence lasted for centuries. Among his pupils we may name Antonius Andreae (d. 1320), the author of the *Expositio in Metaphysicum* which for a long time was ascribed to Scotus himself; Francis of Mayronis (d. 1325); Walter Burleigh (d. after 1343); Thomas Bradardine (d. 1349), who is typical of the Oxonian mathematical tradition; Peter Tartaretus (1490), rector of the University of Paris; Francis Lychetus (d. 1520); Maurice a Portu (d. 1520); and others.

### III. MASTER ECKHART (1260–1327), MYSTIC AND SCHOLASTIC

In the golden age of Scholasticism, besides the spirituality of the intellect there existed a spirituality of the heart—mysticism—and

this not as an entirely different way as frequently has been believed, but rather as something that was both complementary and akin. When, for example, in the *summas* the rational method is alone pursued at great length, this was done for didactic purposes. It does not mean that in reality a unity of notional speculation and religious sentiment was impossible. Precisely in Eckhart, the mystic in the strictest sense of the word, we can see, declares E. Seeberg, how "Scholasticism and mysticism were substantially in agreement." In order to understand Scholasticism we must know something about Eckhart, and to appreciate Eckhart we must know something about Scholasticism.

### LIFE

Master Eckhart (1260-1327), of the Hochheim family, was a member of the Dominican Order, studied at Paris, became a master of theology, later was active in one of the chief offices of his community and in connection with his duties visited many monasteries of his Order. On these occasions he also preached those sermons which were to make him famous and which served to inaugurate a new mystical movement. For a short while he taught in Paris and toward the evening of his life again at Cologne. In his last years misgivings concerning the orthodoxy of his teachings increased. They had their origin partly among the Franciscans and partly in his own Order. The Archbishop of Cologne initiated an ecclesiastical process against him. Eckhart defended himself—the written defense has been rediscovered and is very illuminating as to his actual position—and appealed to the Holy Father. Two years after his death, however, twenty-three theses of his teaching were publicly condemned. In her sentence of condemnation, the Church expressly recognized the fact that the Master had always been in good faith. Of a rebellion against the Church there can be no question. In his written defense we can read the following lines: "Everything that is false either in my writings or in my sermons is without my better knowledge; I am prepared to submit to a more correct explanation. . . . I can err, but to be a heretic, no, that I cannot be; for the former is a matter of the intellect, the latter, of the will."

### WORKS

By far the greater number of his works are in Latin and treat of philosophico-theological problems. His chief work is the unfinished

*Opus Tripartitum.* To this we must add the *Quaestiones Parisienses*. Much is still unpublished. Until everything can be examined it will be difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at a correct definitive judgment of Eckhart. Among his German works the most important are his sermons. They are all preserved only as lecture notes.

### Editions:

J. Quint, *Die Überlieferung der deutschen Predigten Meister Eckharts* (1932). The edition of Pfeiffer (1857) is defective. The translation of Büttner is acknowledged to be bad. To be awaited: *Magistri Eckhart Opera Latina*, ed. Instit. S. Sabinae in urbe, Leipzig (1934 ff.), and *Master Eckhart, Die lateinischen und deutschen werke*. Published on commission of the German Institute of Research (Auftrag der deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft) (Stuttgart, 1936 ff.).

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W. Bange, *Meister Eckharts Lehre vom göttlichen und geschöpflichen Sein* (Limburg an der Lahn, 1937).—J. M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics: Eckhart, Tauler and Suso* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).—Al. Dempf, *Meister Eckhart, Eine Einführung in sein Werk* (Leipzig, 1934).—H. Ebeling, *Meister Eckharts Mystik* (Stuttgart, 1947).—E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 438–442, 755–757.—M. Grabmann, *Neuaufgefunden Pariser Quaestiones Meister Eckharts und ihre Stellung in seinem geistigen Entwicklungsgange* (Munich, 1927).—O. Karrer, *Meister Eckhart, das System seiner religiöse Lehre und Lebensweisheit* (Munich, 1926).—B. J. Muller-Thym, *The Establishment of the University of Being in the Doctrine of Meister Eckhart of Hochheim* (New York, 1939).—G. della Volpe, *Il misticismo speculativo di maestro Eckhart nei suoi rapporti storici* (Bologna, 1930).

### 1. SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND

**Neo-Platonism.** When treating of Eckhart it is necessary to examine those backgrounds which colored his outlook. Of these influences we can name, in the first place, Neo-Platonism and its attendant ideas, as this Neo-Platonism had been developed by the Fathers, especially by St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and later by Eriugena, the school of Chartres, the Arabian philosophers, the *Liber de Causis*, *De Intelligentiis*, and especially by St. Albert and his school.

**Scholasticism.** At least equally decisive for the speculation of

Eckhart was Scholastic theology, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas. One needs only to cast a cursory glance at the index of quotations in the textbook of Karrer to recognize, in the many citations from St. Thomas to be found there, how much the Angelic Doctor influenced him. Eckhart's commentary on the *Sentences*, recently discovered by J. Koch, points in the same direction. Much material that poorly orientated and poorly informed commentators consider to be pantheism and northern self-consciousness is actually the heritage of the Scholastic doctrine on the Trinity and grace and of its speculation on the Logos, which traces its origin by the way of the Fathers to Philo the Jew.

**Mysticism.** Eckhart, finally, subsisted on mysticism, on the Victorines, Rupert of Deutz, Bernard of Clairvaux, and on that mystic stream which was a living intellectual movement in German monasteries during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—a mysticism that was characteristic of such great persons as Hildegard of Bingen, Gertrude the Great, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, and Mechtilde of Hackeborn. As the Franciscan proposals for reform that were drawn up for, and submitted to, the Council of Lyons in 1274 clearly indicate, the disciples of this esoteric circle of mystics occupied themselves with Scholastic speculation. The activity of Eckhart in connection with the monasteries of women had no other objective than to foster this tendency. On the basis of many works written by German mystics and unearthed by Grabmann, we know that John of Sterngassen, Nicholas of Strasbourg, and Gerard of Sterngassen based their thoughts on St. Thomas. Among them a fully developed Scholasticism was not, as some have thought, "a thinning out of basic religious processes, a thinning out that must both destroy them and take their place."

## 2. God

**As pure reasoning.** In his teaching on God, Eckhart insisted that we must always say what God is not, rather than what He is. As a consequence, he did not wish to ascribe to Him the concept of being. According to Eckhart, God is both the thing understood and the act of understanding (*intellectus et intelligere*). In such terminology God is designated as a being free of all creaturehood. Is this fodder for the absolute Idealists? Now even Aristotle, with whom Eckhart was well acquainted, had defined God in precisely the same fashion, and in a similar vein St. Thomas maintained that

in God intellect and essence are identical; and for St. Albert, God is *intellectus universaliter agens* and as such begets the first intelligence. For this reason Eckhart, in unison with the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, can assert that by the "Word" which is truly a *verbum mentis* everything was made. And so it becomes evident that the assertions of negative theology, as Pseudo-Dionysius had recognized, truly possessed positive value for knowledge.

**God as the fullness of being.** 1) *Being as idea.* God is indeed the fullness of being. All being stems from Him. "It is true that everything has its being from Him, just as all white things are white by whiteness" (*Quaes. Par.*). "God created everything, but not in such a way that He worked in things outside or alongside Himself after the fashion in which workingmen perform their labors, but He called it out of nothing, out of non-being, into being, so that they found their being, received it and possess it in Him" (*ibid.*). Thus we see in what sense God is the fullness of being: He contains the ideas of all being within Himself; by creating them He creates being and is immanent to it. In this way the doctrine of ideas continues to live on in Eckhart. And because it is important, we must hold that his doctrine of immanence does not possess a pantheistic sense. The ideas exist through participation and it is only fitting that being in time and space be participated being. For this reason we cannot advance beyond what has already been said (namely, that God is thought and thinking and not being): because He is the Logos and gives expression to the Ideas; "being" should, on the contrary, designate only that which has been created. If we should take "being" to mean the metaphysical essence, the idea of things, then God as the source and the fullness of ideas would be being absolutely. It was in this sense that Eckhart intended God to be called being (*ibid.*).

2) *Ideas and the Son of God.* A favorite idea of Eckhart is his identification of the ideas with the Son of God. "He is the Word of the Father. In one and the same Word the Father expresses Himself and the entire divine nature and everything that God is. . . . By speaking the Word He spoke Himself and all things in another Person and bestowed upon this Person the same nature that He Himself possessed, and He spoke all rationally endowed spirits in the Word as in an image, that is, in an idea essentially the same as Himself, insofar as the image remaining within Him is immanent" (*1. Predigt.*, ed. Quint, p. 15, 9). In this we can detect a certain hesitation and a certain wavering; for Eckhart, when he pursues the

thought further, strongly stressed the created nature of the idea, its "radiation," hence its participation. (Also in the Areopagite the idea of participation stands for the concept, *ens ab alio*.) According to the theology of Eckhart, the Son of God cannot be created. If we should therefore take the Sonship of the ideas literally, as Scholastic theology had been accustomed to do, we would be faced with the danger of effacing the distinction between God and the world. But perhaps we should not strain to make tangible by living language what was conceived and destined only as an image, namely, certain aspects and partial circumstances.

**The existence of God.** We can, as it were, touch with our hands the Christian Platonism of our Master when he asks himself: Does God exist? His answer runs as follows: "Being is the essence of God" (*esse est essentia Dei sive Deus; igitur Deum esse, verum aeternum est; igitur Deus est: Quaes. Par.*, p. 14, 1 ff.). Just as white things cannot be white without whiteness, so things that are cannot be without God (13, 10). Without Him being would be nothing. This is again not pantheism, but an application of the notion of Platonic *methexis* to the existing world. But how can this be? On the one hand Eckhart had emphasized, by means of the doctrine of ideas, that things in their "essential," that is, in their ideal archetypal being are in God and God in them. Now we hear, on the other hand, that space-time being participates in God; for when Eckhart speaks of existence, he means precisely this. This is actually the starting point; but then he singles out in things the essential, ideal, or proper being and in this respect God is immanent in them. He looks at the world with the eyes of Plato. If he understands that a thing as such exists in time and space, he clearly means that it is a creature and this creature is "mortal."

### 3. THE GOOD

**The goal of ethics.** Eckhart is entirely himself when he takes up ethical questions. What he offers is a doctrine of Christian perfection in which he deems it of particular importance to transfer the ideal of perfection onto the plane of actual living, so that it will of itself beget life anew. He does not seek to be master of the written word, but of life. Practice is to him more important than theory. "It is better to offer a hungry man food than to launch into an interior meditation, while he is starving. And if a man were in ecstasy as St. Paul had been and knew of a sick man who begged for a bowl

of broth, I hold it would be better, from a motive of charity, to abandon the ecstasy and supply his wants—and this with a much greater love because of the renunciation." He shows by this that he is in accord with his famous confrere, Thomas Aquinas: "St. Thomas teaches that in all respects active love is greater than contemplation, for in the former there pours out into act that love which was acquired during contemplation" (Karrer, *Meister Eckhart. Das System seiner religiösen Lehre und Lebensweisheit*, p. 190 f.). The ethics of Eckhart is geared to the motto: "Oneness with the One." This "oneness" should denote a knowledgeable and living participation in the Supreme Good and His perfections. Practically it signifies the union of our thinking and willing with God. And the notion behind it is the Supreme Good and His infinite perfections as such. Eckhart is a normative ethicist and does not, as a consequence, need to be purged of a morality based on compensation.

**The way to perfection.** The way to this oneness is the way of God's birth in men. This oft-discussed notion is a central concept in the whole philosophy of Eckhart.

1) *God's birth as an indwelling of the Holy Spirit.* We can distinguish a twofold birth of God in the soul: In the first place there is that birth which Scholastic theology has called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just. The doctrine of grace, in accordance with Sacred Scripture, had always emphasized the fact that only through the grace of Christ do we become children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit, in which God takes up His abode; He is "born" in us, as Eckhart now says. Since this divine birth takes place by means of gift and grace, we cannot speak of pantheism in connection with it.

2) *God's birth as an inner Trinitarian procession.* Eckhart treats of still another divine birth. This is the birth of which he speaks when he declares that there takes place in the soul that divine birth which is perfected in God Himself from all eternity. "The Father begets the Son equal to Himself. . . . But to this I add: He begets Him also in my soul. . . . In this birth the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Spirit. Everything which the Father is able to do He bequeaths to and generates in His Son, that the Son might beget it in our souls. . . . Thus, the soul becomes a divine dwelling place for the eternal Godhead" (Pfeiffer, *Deutsche Mystiker des 14. Jahrhunderts*, II, pp. 205, 165, 215). If this inner Trinitarian divine procession is perfected in my soul, it is only logical that Eckhart should continue

in the following strain: "That God is truly the God He is, of that I am the cause. Were this not so, God would not be God" (*ibid.*, p. 283). A text ready-made for pantheistic interpretation! But Eckhart speculates still more profoundly on the idea of ourselves, "on the unbegotten manner according to which we have existed eternally and should continue eternally" (*ibid.*). "As the creature did not exist in himself, as he does not and forever more, this creature was, before the world began, in God and in His mind" (*ibid.*, p. 488). In this ideal form of being all things are in God; or more truly in God the Father: "In the heart of the fatherhood . . . there all blades of grass, and all wood and stone and all things are one" (*ibid.*, p. 332). These are therefore the *praeconceptiones divinae*, "the preconceived things," as Eckhart called them in emulation of Pseudo-Dionysius; in short, they are the whole *mundus intelligibilis*. And if God now begets the Son as the Word, in which He expresses Himself together with His entire being, or, as the "image as it has been eternally in Him, this is His form remaining in Himself" (*ibid.*); then "we" are truly a cause of God, but not the created "we," but only the idea of our ego in the mind of God, no more and no less than all the ideas that constitute the essence of God. This is not surprising; it represents only an application of the speculation on the Logos which had been handed down traditionally from Philo. For the ethics of Eckhart these thoughts are important insofar as there results from them an archetype in God for every human being, an eternally better ego, an ego archetype which is our measure and our eternal law. By this law the bed of the stream of our personal being and life is traced, a bed which will conduct that stream into the ocean of the divinity, from which we had at one time come.

3) "*Sparklets of the soul.*" How does the world of ideas and of the ideal ego merge into the eternal Word? Eckhart says that we have a direct ingress into it, namely, through the so-called "sparklet of the soul" (*scintilla animae*) or the fortress of the soul or the *arca mentis*, as it is sometimes called. There has been much written on this score, perhaps unnecessarily, but it is also not surprising. The characteristic element in it is the concept of participation. Eckhart acknowledges the divine in man. With St. Augustine he was of the opinion that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. This phraseology of St. Augustine is perhaps the best interpretation of the "sparklet of the soul." But Eckhart also acknowledges the difference between the

human and the divine. For this reason in his apologetic work he writes: If the soul were only this, it would be uncreated. But because of the fact that the soul participates in God, it possesses the divine within itself, the "sparklet of the soul"; on the other hand, because of the fact that it only participates and is consequently not entirely divine, it is created. In the language of Aquinas, this concept would be phrased more prosaically and would be called the *synderesis* or the *habitus principiorum* (cf. p. 441); in the language of modern philosophy it would merit the label *the sense of value*. It is the point at which man, who is the mediator between two worlds, knows that he belongs to the divine in a genuine participation.

4) *Christ*. A second, more tangible means of arriving at our better ego is found by Eckhart in the concept of Christ, in whom the Word became flesh. Both ways will be traversed by Nicholas of Cusa, who acquired it from Eckhart.

#### 4. INFLUENCE

Eckhart has actually become what he always wanted to become, a master who guided life and living. His thoughts found ready acceptance among all classes of people. Avoiding the pitfall of censured propositions, his Order, together with many of his confreres, has continued his work in the same spirit with which he had begun it. Of his two most important disciples the first was John Tauler (d. 1361), around whom the so-called "friends of God" gathered. These "friends" were drawn from the ranks of the mystically oriented diocesan and religious clergy, but especially from the women's monasteries along the Rhine. Their fabulous strength of will and their rich interior life made a great impression even on Luther. After Tauler we place Henry Suso (d. 1366), the troubadour of eternal Wisdom, in whom speculation and the heart react upon one another and bring forth much fruit—a typical phenomena in Scholastic mysticism. Of the same spiritual lineage as Eckhart are the *Deutsche Theologie* which was edited by Luther and the work of John Ruysbroek (d. 1381), whose pupil Gerhard de Groote founded the Congregation of the Brethren of the Common Life. In one of their convents, that of Deventer, the young promising Nicholas of Cusa was trained and educated. In the nineteenth century Franz von Baader succeeded in turning again the attention of the world to Eckhart as the moving spirit behind the mysticism of the Middle

Ages. Hegel extolled him as the "hero of speculation." Of importance for the research focusing on Eckhart was the discovery of his Latin works by H. Denifle.

# CHAPTER 22

## LATE SCHOLASTICISM: FROM OCKHAM TO CUSANUS

Late Scholasticism is generally considered to be a synonym for an era of decline. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries accomplished nothing creative, but merely toyed with great problems of philosophy and dallied over trifling matters. This was true also of a great number of other phenomena in different branches during the same period. We must nevertheless bear in mind that while research into this epoch has just begun, it has already become increasingly evident that it will unearth material which will enable us in the future to form a more positive estimate of these two centuries—something that has not been possible hitherto. In any event, at its beginning stands William of Ockham, who had a school founded after him and left his imprint undeniably on these two centuries. At its end is Nicholas of Cusa, who revived the best in Scholastic tradition in such a way that we can consider this epoch as the actual beginning of modern times and especially of German philosophy.

### I. OCKHAM AND OCKHAMISM

#### LIFE AND WORKS

William of Ockham, the *Inceptor venerabilis*, was born south of London in 1300. He became a Franciscan, studied at Oxford, taught there, was accused of teaching heretical doctrine, and summoned to Avignon. He fled and joined forces with Louis of Bavaria. "Emperor, protect me with your sword, and I will defend you with my pen," he is reported to have said. After 1329 he lived in Munich and championed the interests behind the ecclesiastical politics of his friend, Louis. After the latter's death, he sought reconciliation with the Pope and abjured his earlier teachings. In 1349 William died in Munich, probably of the Black Death, and was buried there.

His most important philosophical works include: *Super Quattuor Libros Sententiarum Subtilissimae Quaestiones*; *Quodlibeta Septem*; *Expositio Aurea et Admodum Utilis Super Artes Veteres*; *Summa Totius Logicae*; *Summulae in Libros Physicorum* or *Philosophia Naturalis*.

### Editions:

*Guilhelmi de Ockam anglici super quattuor libros sententiarum subtilissimae quaestiones earumdemque decisiones* (Lyons, 1945). — *Quodlibeta septem* (Paris, 1487; Strasbourg, 1491). — *Expositio aurea et admodum utilis super artem veterem* (Bologna, 1496). — *Summa totius logicae* (Paris, 1948); *William Ockham, Summa logicae*, Pars I, ed. by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: St. Bonaventure College, 1951). — *Quaestio prima principialis Prologi in primum librum sententiarum cum interpretatione Gabrielis Biel*, ed. by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M. (Paderborn, 1939). — *The Tractatus de successivis, attributed to William Ockham*, ed. by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: St. Bonaventure College, 1944). — *Ockham: Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M. (London, 1952). — *The Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus* of William Ockham, ed. by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: St. Bonaventure College, 1945). — English translation of selections from *The Seven Quodlibeta* in R. McKeon, *Selections from Mediaeval Philosophers* (London, 1930), II, 360–421.

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*Philosophie van Occam in zijn Commentaar op de Sententiën*, 2 vols. (Hilversum, 1936).

## 1. KNOWLEDGE

**The new concept of experience.** Beginning with his teaching on the source and validity of knowledge, Ockham speaks with the voice of another age. Scotus himself had referred to experience, but he immediately followed by restating and re-emphasizing the activity of the understanding. In it alone is to be found the entire efficient cause of our intellectual knowledge. This was the spirit of the old theories on the *intellectus agens* favored by the Scholastics in the centuries before Ockham. For this agent intellect, according to St. Thomas, experience served only as the material cause. Even in the Scotistic doctrine of the *natura communis*, the universal that bypassed experience is revived, even if in a disguised fashion. In Ockham, however, sense experience becomes a genuine efficient cause. According to him, we need nothing more than the intuitive sensory glimpse of the objects of the material world or the intellectual reflexive contemplation of our own interior acts in order to have the source of knowledge of a real world. It is from these that we form by abstraction our universal concepts and propositions, and these form the elements with which science works. The traditional *species* are no longer required. "An active and a passive element, namely, the object and knowledge, are both joined together and the result is present without anything else being necessary" (*In II Sent.*, q. 15, 150). It is interesting to note that Ockham has completely left out of consideration the fact that the intelligible species themselves stem from experience. He held them to be a metaphysical requisite artificially introduced by philosophers on grounds which Ockham considered unsound (*In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2 K). A valuable judgment passed by the epoch itself! Ockham, in effect, declares that the "experience" which leads to the species is no experience at all. As a result, this was an "experience" merely assumed by Aquinas and Aristotle, by Plato and Augustine.

**Against the universals.** Ockham rejected species, common nature, and in general every universal *ante rem* and *in re*. The universal is an object of thought; it has no ontological magnitude. "The universal is only in the soul and therefore it is not in things" (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 7 G).

**The Nominalist.** What, then, is in the soul? A sign, a content of

meaning, an inner significance (*intentio*) by which we characterize something and keep it in mind. But as a sign it is always something conventional (*tantum ex institutione*: *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 8 E). In fact, it is a fiction (*quoddam fictum*). In short, the sign is nothing more than a name by which we refer to a designated object—*non plus quam vox est sui significati* (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 7 T). Ockham is a nominalist. It is true that he also wanted desperately to acquire knowledge of reality by the means of concepts and thereby made a distinction between true and false. But he was sceptical and doubted whether the universal concepts gained through abstraction would be able to supply us with that which the ancients had expected from them: to illuminate the innermost constitution of things and to reproduce their intrinsic nature. God alone is capable of doing that. Man is restrained from it; he has only signs which do indeed mean something, but in him there is no *intellectus agens* to give rise to the inner image of things. “The universal is not generated [against Scotus], but originates through abstraction, which is nothing more than a certain fiction” (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 8 E). In this antithesis to an understanding of concepts which recognizes in them a possible approach to metaphysical transcendency, we find Ockham’s novel contribution, and therein is found the meaning of “nominalism.” Ockham wished to possess truth, but he set the limits of knowledge differently than had the preceding ages; he set them much more narrowly. By comparison with him, Scotus belongs to the ancient philosophers. Since the scepticism of the other nominalists—which led inevitably to doubt about the principle of contradiction—is closely bound up with that of Ockham, we can appreciate what was at stake. In Ockham, Abelard came back to life. The development in the direction taken by Abelard was truly retrograde. The full effect of this doubt will be recognized only later when the English of modern times begin to philosophize about the origin and the limitations of our knowledge.

**The primacy of the individual.** The whole matter becomes much clearer when we consider the fact that according to Ockham only the individual or particular is known. The particular is the first known and the only genuine thing that is known (*Quodlib.*, I, q. 13). In fact, he is sometimes of the opinion, as Antisthenes had been, that we cannot predicate the notion, man, of Socrates and of other men in a univocal sense; this notion is true only of Socrates in the same

sense, namely, that he is a man. As a consequence, only the proposition "Socrates is Socrates" can be entirely true (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 7 X). For this reason there can be no universal ideas in God. God creates only particulars, and these would be the ideas. Scotus had already expressed the same thought, but now it is reiterated much more radically, for Scotus had always assumed a common nature—a concept which Ockham attacked vigorously. Aristotle also had declared himself in favor of a first substance and declared that it had more being and possessed greater notional value than the second substance. But he did not carry out his thesis to its logical conclusion, because he made of his second substance a metaphysical principle and an essence. Only a naturalistic interpretation of Aristotle assumed his original explanation as true and as a result rejected logically the "apriori by nature." St. Thomas also repeated the explanation of Aristotle, but he did not think that it was necessary to follow him blindly. The simpler and the more abstract a thing is, so much the higher is its value, just as it had been in Platonism. Neo-Platonism had guided him back to Plato. Ockham nevertheless remained firmly attached to the particular and also professed his faith in it. He tended, therefore, in the direction of the naturalistic interpretation of Aristotle.

## 2. GOD

The individualism of Ockham encroaches on his teaching on God. As a consequence he assumed an unusual position.

**The omnipotence of God.** If there are no universal ideas in God, the will of God is entirely free—to put the matter in its simplest terms. The will is no longer required to carry out what has been prescribed for it; it can enfold itself in all its omnipotence. The omnipotent will of God is not arbitrary, according to Ockham. He championed this view because he reasoned that the principle of contradiction holds true also for God, and that God cannot do anything that is inherently contradictory.

1) *Potentia Dei absoluta* and 2) *Potentia Dei ordinata*. With the aforementioned exception the power of God is absolute (*potentia Dei absoluta*). But in addition to it there exists still another limitation, and that in the divine will itself. God has imposed upon Himself limits beyond which He cannot go by positively ordaining once and for all a definite and rigid order for all things. God is

bound to observe this order (*potentia Dei ordinata*). But it is also true that God could have established another order or economy, if He had so willed.

In this respect Ockham is manifestly influenced by theological concepts. He had before his eyes positive revelation and its laws, for he was of the opinion in general that the doctrine of the power of God is a dogma of faith and not simply a postulate of reason. With this we are given the reason that led him to formulate his teaching as he did. The critical sense of Ockham was as little able, as that of Scotus before him, to recognize as rationally necessary all that philosophers of other centuries had considered as such—for example, the whole natural law. This rationalism entrenched in credulous reason had to be eliminated and in its place more faith along with positive manifestations of God's will as well as divine grace had to be substituted and projected into the foreground—something which had been entrusted to the Augustinianism of the Franciscans. But when we consider that even St. Thomas conceded to God's wisdom no temporal priority over His will and regarded intellect and will as really identical in God, we can appreciate that a polemic concerning it is no longer necessary. The only objection we can raise against Aquinas' theory is its formulation, which might lead us to believe that the intellect had prescribed a definite course for the will, not only insofar as men but also insofar as God is concerned. Of course, this was only a human, simplified way of expressing something very difficult to comprehend. In Ockham, moreover, the formulations might give rise to the impression that they actually lead to contradictions, as for example when he opines that the absolute omnipotence of God could have decreed that the Son of God become incarnate in the form of a donkey.

**The will of God.** The doctrine of the omnipotence of God supplied Ockham with a means of resolving the problem of ethical principles. God wills the good, not because it is good, but it is good precisely because He so wills it. According to him we can reason that God could replace the entire moral order that is now valid with an entirely new one, and not merely with regard to the commandments of the second table of the Decalogue as Scotus had said. St. Thomas held that the natural law is unchangeable because it is a necessity of reason. Ockham, however, followed in the footsteps of Scotus and was even more individualistic and voluntaristic in outlook. Whether his viewpoint is justified or not—we could argue about it

at length, because to Ockham the intellect and the will of God are identical — historians have labeled him as a moral positivist. By his exaggerated examples and formulations, he has furnished them more or less with corroboration for their charge. The distorted conception which Kant entertained of "theonomenal" morality can be traced to him. Gabriel Biel, Luther ("I am of the school of Ockham"), and Descartes are stages in the journey which return inevitably to him.

### 3. THE NOMINALISTS

The coterie around Ockham is called (in contrast to the ancients [*antiqui*] and their realism of ideas [*reales*]) the Modernists (*moderni*) and also Nominalists because of their rejection of the reality of universals. Some of his followers unduly stressed Ockham's criticism of the theory of knowledge, whereas others emphasized the pretensions of scientific experience and were as a consequence oriented positively in the direction of the natural sciences.

**The critics.** The critical spirit of the Nominalists is not entirely due to Ockham. In Henry of Ghent (d. 1293), in Durandus (d. 1334), and in Peter Aureolus (d. 1322) one can already detect the critical spirit, especially in connection with the problem of the metaphysical importance of our concepts. With the Nominalists the break with the past is definite, because they abandoned the fundamental certainties and the basic convictions that had been the heritage of tradition. Nicholas of Autrecourt (d. 1350) attacked the principle of contradiction, the evidence of the principle of causality, the idea of substance; he professed his allegiance to atomism. Peter d'Ailly (d. 1420) vigorously criticized Aristotelianism, and insofar as the fundamental problems of the theory of knowledge are concerned he shared the scepticism of Nicholas of Autrecourt. More moderate disciples of Nominalistic criticism were the English Franciscan Adam Wodham (d. 1358); the Dominican Robert Holkot (d. 1349); John Mirecourt, a great number of whose propositions were condemned in 1347; the General of the Augustinians, Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358); the first rector of the University of Heidelberg, Marsilius of Inghen (d. 1396); John Gerson (d. 1429); and the "last Scholastic," Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), professor in Tübingen. The center of the Nominalistic school was Paris. In Germany establishments modeled on his thought were to be found in Vienna, Erfurt, Prague, and Heidelberg.

**The natural scientists.** To those who tended in the direction of the natural sciences, we must list John Buridan (d. after 1358), who brought an end to the domination of the Aristotelian physics and traced motion to an *impetus* rather than to a striving after a natural place; Albert of Saxony (d. 1390), the first rector of the University of Vienna, who busied himself with the problem of gravitation; and Nicholas of Oresme (d. 1382), who with his *Scientia seu Mathematica de Latitudinibus Formarum* became the founder of that literary genre known as the "latitudes of form," which had for its object the co-ordination of the various uniformities and difformities, both of speed and of qualities, with geometric figures, and who, if he did not by this theory anticipate the analytic geometry of Descartes, was nevertheless the most gifted philosopher of natural philosophy in the fourteenth century. We have every reason to suppose that his teaching is at least one of those seeds from which analytical geometry later developed. Since Duhem's investigation of Leonardo da Vinci, historical philosophers have discerned in the natural science of the Ockhamists the forerunner of the physics of Galileo and of the theories of Copernicus. The more recent and the most penetrating research of A. Maier (*An der Grenze von Scholastik und Naturwissenschaft*, "Studien zur Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts," 1943) shows this view to be held "with justice and injustice. It did not happen, as we formerly liked to believe, that the individual thinkers of the fourteenth century, leaping over the boundaries of time and remaining for a while without seeming influence and in part without being understood, had anticipated the important and the most fundamental theories of the later classical physicists, theories which would again be taken up and developed three centuries later, so that the beginning of the period of natural sciences must be placed not in the seventeenth century, but at least in the fourteenth. . . . Actual events and the true circumstances should, however, be construed in such a fashion that on the one hand we give full credit to the science of Galileo, as one who travelled a new and entirely correct road for the first time, and on the other hand we admit that the decline of Scholasticism had much more to do with it than to offer a few disparate and unclear conjectures for future developments." Among the subjects of paramount interest in the natural sciences we must enumerate three chief themes: the structure of material substance, gravitation and descent, the mathematics of the latitude of forms.

## II. NICHOLAS OF CUSA

### THE MIDDLE AGES AND MODERN TIMES

If we number Nicholas of Cusa among late Scholastics, we do not by that fact intend to convey the impression that his philosophy was a "second spring" of Scholasticism. The specific and scholastic technique of question and response, the syllogistics and the cult of authority fostered by the science of the Schools were foreign to him; in fact, he hoped and sought to liberate philosophy from the trammels of such methods. He lived, however, in the declining years of the Middle Ages and was nourished by its great treasures of knowledge in which the spirit of antiquity and of Patristic times had been preserved. He understood the concepts which would prove to be capable of furnishing the future with material of speculation, concepts with which the mathematical and natural scientific tendencies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had wrestled; and he sought to bring the Middle Ages not only to its senses but also to self-realization. In contrast to Bacon and Descartes, he did not know how to proceed, but he agreed in substance with them.

Christianity, Platonism, and the natural sciences are the three great components of his speculation. He found them in the Middle Ages, but they were all but concealed and had become immobile because of misunderstandings concerning them. He sought to trace them to their true original sources, to understand them profoundly, and to restore them to life in the form of a new synthesis. He no longer concerned himself with the precedence of reason over revelation, but created a problem out of reason itself and by so doing sought to reach the first principle of all beings. The ideas which he developed in the process were of such importance that only now do we appreciate their full import in the philosophy of German idealism, and, as a consequence, we can, with Hoffmann, speak of Cusanus as the "true founder of German philosophy." But what is even more important, Cusanus fused into a continuum in the Western mind the Middle Ages and modern times, German rationalism and Christian philosophy.

### LIFE

Nicholas Chrypffs (Krebs) was born in 1401 at Kues on the Moselle. He was educated by the Brethren of the Common Life, and due to

their efforts, he was subjected to certain influences which produced lasting effects upon him: love of books and ancient languages, the idea of a Christianity that had endured much and could teach a conduct of life, and finally the experience of mysticism.

He studied at Heidelberg (1416) but the *via Marsiliana* (the doctrine of Marsilio of Padua, d. 1336/1343), as Ockhamism was known there, did not appeal to him; for after only one year he went to Padua, where he studied Canon Law in addition to the natural sciences, mathematics, and philosophy. Through the teachers lecturing there, who were in part from Greece, he found entry into the ancient world, both Greek and Roman. After six years, imbued with the spirit of a classical education and of a classical culture, he returned home and then journeyed to Cologne by way of Mayence, where he was ordained priest in 1430. Thereafter the field of his activity was immeasurably increased.

As early as 1432 we meet with him at the Council of Basel, where at the beginning he aligned himself with the party of the Council; but when he found that it could not arrive at unity within its own ranks, he allied himself with the Sovereign Pontiff. His position was not the result of chance, but was the product of his entire method of reasoning. Aside from the fact that his sound and proved ability to reach decisions could not approve of the inconclusive glibness of the party, he reasoned as a Platonist here as on other occasions before and after, that the many could not exist without the One and the One could not be without the many. For this reason he both advocated a unifying ecclesiastical supreme authority and recommended a uniform supreme civil authority, although in principle he clung to the sovereignty of the people both in spiritual matters and in temporal affairs. This was a practical application of the notion of *methexis* or participation. He was animated by such a view when in 1438 he became a member of an embassy despatched to the imperial palace in Constantinople. This embassy was instructed to sue for and if possible to effect a reunion of the East with the West. *Una religio in rituum diversitate* is the way in which the basic principle was phrased, and this principle was a confession of dialectical unity between the one and the many, through which both participants in the ensuing discussions would obtain their rights. On his return journey the idea for his *Docta ignorantia* struck him, that is, the notion of a synthesis (coincidence) of opposites in the Infinite — it came to him as an inspiration.

In the years that followed, we find him as a papal legate at the Diets of Nuremberg and of Frankfurt. In 1448 he was created a cardinal, because he had so courageously championed the rights of the Church. In 1450 he was made Bishop of Brixen and at the same time a *visitator* and *reformator* of the German monasteries. The realization of his ideals met with the opposition of the non-ideal which had become entrenched as custom or had developed into "a right." He was, as a consequence, embroiled in heated controversy with Sigismund, Duke of Tyrol, in the course of which he was imprisoned. Cusanus died at Todi, in Umbria, in 1464. His body was interred in Rome in the Church of St. Peter in Chains; his heart was returned to Germany and found a repository in Kues, as he had wished. There we can still see his extraordinary library.

## W O R K S

The most important of his works is *De Docta Ignorantia* (1440), three volumes of "Learned" or "Instructed Ignorance" on God, the world, and man. This has been called by E. Hoffmann "the first classical German philosophical work, which actually laid the groundwork for modern philosophy." In the same year appeared *De Coniecturis*, which developed the theme of "Instructed Ignorance" still further. A defense of his position against the attacks of the rector of Heidelberg, John Wenck, is his *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* (1449). Under the common title *Idiota* (of laymen) there appeared three tractates in 1450: *De Sapientia*, *De Mente*, *De Staticis Experimentis*. Dealing with the relations of the individual with God we have: *De Visione Dei* (1453). On that of a being to a possible: *De Possest* (1460). *De Venatione Sapientiae* (1463) treats of the position of Cusanus within the philosophical framework of philosophical evolution and is so to speak his philosophical last will and testament.

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### 1. SPIRIT

The portal which leads into the philosophy of Cusanus is his theory of knowledge. We can orientate ourselves rather quickly on its principal features by means of a clever conversation that was carried on in a Roman barbershop by a certain “unimportant layman” and a “famous speaker.” This barbershop was located in a store front that directly faced the Roman Forum. As a consequence the colloquy takes place in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the market place. The two fictitious characters observed this activity very carefully, and concerning it they began to philosophize and to rationalize (*Idiota de Sapientia*, ed. Meiner, I, 6 ff.). They see how the produce is counted, measured, and weighed, and they ask themselves the question: How is this counting, this measuring, this weighing carried out? By means of distinctions. And how were these distinctions made? Do they not count one by one (*per unum numerantur*), by taking into their hands one thing at a time and counting once, twice, and thrice; so that the one is one the first time, the second the second time, the third the third time, and so forth? From this it follows, at least Cusanus drew this conclusion, that the act of counting has its origin in the one: *per unum ergo fit omnis numerus*. And this is true also of the units of weight and units of measure. All counting, all weighing, and all measuring is performed in, through, and from the one. How should this ultimate oneness, this unity, this principle of counting, measuring, and weighing, be itself conceived and understood? That I do not know, confesses the famous orator; I know only that the *unitas* cannot be comprehended by a number, because a number is subsequent to the one (*quia numerus est post unum*). This is true also of weights

and of measures. A composition is always subsequent to the existence of its parts, the layman adds, and therefore the composite cannot number, measure, or weigh the simple (without parts); but contrariwise, the simple can perform these functions for the composite. As a consequence, that something through which and in which and out of which things are numbered, measured, and weighed cannot be embraced or grasped by number, measure, or weight (*numero, pondere, mensura inattingibile*).

Up to this point the example has been clear. The objective, however, at which Cusanus aimed was the principle of all being. In regard to it the conditions are the same as they were for other tangible realities. The principle of all things is therefore that through which, out of which, and in which all derivates are derived; it itself, on the contrary, cannot be grasped by anything subsequent to it, but contrariwise everything else can be apprehended by it, as we have just seen in connection with the counting: *Ipsum est, per quod, in quo et ex quo omne intelligibile intelligitur, et tamen intellectu inattingibile*. In these references we have in a nutshell all the essential elements of the philosophy of Cusanus.

**Docta ignorantia.** 1) *As Socratic awakening.* As the primary element in Cusanus' theory of knowledge we are struck immediately by his idea of "a learned ignorance." Different factors enter into it. On the one hand, he brings together those same tendencies which Socrates had formerly pursued in his famous dictum: "I know that I know nothing." There are men, and to this Cusanus will bear witness, who remain fixed to one spot and do not notice that they actually have no knowledge of much that they believe they know. They should be roused from their lethargy so that they may be able to delve deeper and finally to arrive at true knowledge. Cusanus was convinced that the traditional knowledge obtained in the schools, knowledge that had become hidebound by traditions, needed to be roused and to be released; and he applied himself to the task of acquainting himself with his own ignorance and in so doing to bring himself to acquire true knowledge. His teaching had, however, a more profound reason behind it than this aspect of stimulating thought.

2) *As negative theology.* Cusanus was of the opinion, as we saw in the train of thought from which we have already quoted, that the principle of all things, God, not only is actually little known, but also that He cannot essentially be known. In His essence God is incomprehensible (*inattingibilis*).

3) *As an infinite way of knowing.* In his opinion we cannot represent to ourselves the essence of a thing in its "itselfness." "Nothing in this world is so precise that it could not be grasped more precisely; nothing so straight that it could not be straighter; nothing so true that it could not be truer" runs a passage in the *Idiota de Sapientia* (ed. Meiner, II, 32). The *De Staticis Experimentis* begins with this thought and the *De Coniecturis* is wholly devoted to it. Cusanus did not occupy himself willingly with the concept of "adequate" knowledge as had the Stoics and the Middle Ages before him. The process of arriving at knowledge is an endless road, a road of surmises and conjectures, hence the title of his tractate, *De Coniecturis*. In it he develops the thought that in our speculation we attempt to determine a being by ever new aspects. Emphasis must be placed on the word "attempt." Truth does not become evident all at once; we must come into contact with it piecemeal through the essence of things. Only mathematical objects and works of art—objects produced by our intellect—are truer in the intellect than they are in reality (*De beryllo*, c. 32).

The entire thought is in itself not new; for negative theology—and Cusanus was greatly influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius and his doctrine concerning God as the superessential and supercomprehensible even in regard both to terms and to style—had taught us this truth concerning our knowledge of God, and Nominalism had discarded the theory of imitation and had sketched very narrow limits for a knowledge of an essence. Cusanus, however, added something positive to the negative. We are aware of our ignorance of God, because we know something about the infinite. If we should wish to say that we know the infinite, we would exaggerate; but we can venture to say that we "know something about" it, and in this knowledge we could include both the extremes, namely, the remains and the possession. Even so, Cusanus concedes to the Nominalists the justice of their critical attitude in regard to whatever concerns the knowledge of essence, but immediately proposes an absolute relativism by permitting the knowledge of surmise and conjecture to become a knowledge of prototypes. In the same sentence in which he says that nothing in this world is entirely precise, he assumes prototypes of "absolute" correctness, truth, justice, and goodness. They are not of this world, but we measure the world by them, and they are something quite positive (*Idiota de Sap.*, ed. Meiner, II, 32 f.). In both cases, insofar as our knowledge of God

and of the essence of things is concerned, it is the doctrine of ideas and the concept of participation which enabled Cusanus to offer a criticism of the limitations of our knowledge without falling prey to scepticism. Everything falls short of the idea, but nevertheless everything partakes of it. Cusanus reasoned much more progressively than did Scholasticism, which quickly seized upon the species; he knew that in Nominalism its disciples had hit upon something that was correct, but at the same time he appreciated that there was a positive element in Scholasticism; he rescued the knowledge of essences by ascribing to them the task of an endless road. In opposition to Nominalism he had given the helm a sharp twist, somewhat in the way that St. Thomas had done in connection with Abelard; but in spite of this he prepared the way for the speculation of modern times by dissipating false hopes. He is, as a consequence, the union of the best in both these periods which he joins together so that the one age is able to learn from the other.

4) *As mystical way.* How strongly the heritage of the past lives on in Cusanus we can appreciate from the fact that for him "learned ignorance" also possesses a mystical meaning. He speaks of an intuition of the unseen God, in which we can discover all our concepts and representations, and in which we can permit everything to become enveloped in silence, everything that had formerly found expression in us: *mystica theologia dicit ad vacationem et silentium, ubi est visio . . . invisibilis Dei* (*Apol. de Ignor.*, ed. Meiner, 7). True, in such a process we enter into a twilight, but this very darkness is itself light and this ignorance is the way "which all wise men before and after Dionysius have traveled" (*ibid.*, ed. Meiner, 20). How much on this point Cusanus does justice to modern experience can be shown by a comparison of this view with the chapter "*Les sources*" in the *Logic* of Gratry.

**Apriorism.** 1) *The One.* The second element in the theory of knowledge developed by Cusanus is its apriorism. The *unum* or one is an existent something which precedes our knowledge. This characteristic is stressed very forcibly in the conversation held in the Roman Forum, which we assume as the basis of his presentation. Like St. Augustine (*De lib. arb.*, II, 8, 22) whom he directly follows, Cusanus does not permit the One to be derived from experience through abstraction; the process is rather the exact opposite—everything is derived through, out of, and in the One, and becomes known through it. How he represents this to himself can be discovered

in Chapter Four of the *Idiota de Mente*. Our mind, as he says there, is an image and a likeness of the divine mind. The divine mind as an absolute notion is the notion of all notions and the form of all forms and in its absolute unity it contains everything, so that from the divine mind as from a *complicatio* we can derive all explanations and so we arrive at a world with its variety. In like fashion our mind, if it is an image, contains everything, and thus everything is actually involved in itself and may evolve or "evolute" of itself: just as a number is the development of the One, motion the development of rest, time the development of simplicity, extension the development of the point, inequality the development of equality, variety the development of identity, etc.

2) *Sensible reality*. Cusanus was indebted to Aristotle when, in contrast to Plato, he describes the soul as a bare tablet upon which the senses must first write their message. He assumes, however, that the mind possesses a fundamental criterion without which it could not progress (*concreatum iudicium*), a criterion by which it can pass judgment on all things; for example, whether a thing is a genuine *bonum*, *iustum*, *verum*, or another essence (*quidditas*), if the senses notify us of something of this kind. The mind is placed univocally and unequivocally above the sense world. Knowledge does indeed begin with it, but the mind is its judgment and only by it is knowledge perfected. In this context Cusanus refers expressly to *Phaedo* (75 b-e and 100 b) (see above, p. 79), and remarks that if by the Platonic ideas we wish to understand the original power of judgment possessed by the human mind, we would inevitably be led to the conclusion that "in this respect Plato had not been entirely mistaken."

In such a statement we discern an intimation of the vital reason behind the learned ignorance of Cusanus. He made Plato's concept of participation his own and logically thought it through to its conclusion. The apriorism of the idea governed his entire philosophy. From this it follows, as a matter of course, that through notions not only being but also knowledge always fall short of the full truth of the ideal, because everything strives to be just as the idea is, but they are all incapable of attaining such an objective, as we had already seen in *Phaedo*, 75 b. Because we all, nevertheless, participate in it, and because the idea is in some fashion present in being and in the mind, and because knowledge does not remain fixed in only the

negative, we are able to evade absolute scepticism and relativism, and we can arrive at the possession of genuine knowledge.

**Coincidentia oppositorum.** 1) *Ontological.* If everything can be derived from the *unum* or One, as numbers from the *Monas*, manifestly the antitheses which appear with the many must coincide with the infinite. This is the viewpoint which the followers of Cusanus advocated and in this thought of the *coincidentia oppositorum* Cusanus himself saw the greatness and the finest product of his philosophy, the ray of light that struck him on his return journey from Byzantium. This synthesis or coincidence is first of all an ontological principle. As such it denotes that in the infinite (the limitless) all limits have their origin and in it all coincide. If, for example, we were to raise a quadrilateral to a pentagon (i.e., a figure of five sides) and the pentagon in turn to a hexagon (i.e., a figure of six sides), etc., or even to the *n*th power, so that the *n*th power became ever greater and greater, and the *n*th-sided figure gradually approached the circle, and if the *n*th were infinite, it would merge with infinity itself. The same thing would hold true of all other antitheses (or opposites). In the infinite primal source of being, that is, in God, everything is involuted into a unity which in our world evolves into multiplicity and variety. In Him everything belongs to the One and is one, and only after their emergence from Him do objects either separate from one another or unite with one another in antitheses (opposites).

2) *Logical.* From this ontological consideration there dawned upon Cusanus the insight afforded by his epistemology that our knowledge with the multiplicity of its rules and its definitions had developed from an infinite unity, the unity of reason. The rules of logic, together with the basic principle of contradiction, are valid only for the speculation of the understanding; in reason itself, on the contrary, they are abrogated, because reason is the source of all intellectual life and ultimate unity, from whose creative power the fullness of the many is derived and assumes a definite form. In this concept of reason, philosophers have detected the beginnings of modern German philosophy; for it is nothing more than the theory of synthetic unity as the productive element of our entire knowledge, upon which Kant's critique of reason rests, something that Leibniz would have wanted, and something which Fichte developed into the theory of the pure ego, and with which Schelling and Schleiermacher sought to join the individual ego to the infinity of the universe and of God.

If we should not exaggerate too greatly the concept of the creative (which in modern philosophy denotes an opposition to ancient metaphysics) assumed by Cusanus—in the divine mind the entire primordial world pre-exists (*Idiota de Sap.*; ed. Meiner, II, 30) and our mind reflects it in an activity which is expressly denominated as an *assimilatio* (*De Mente*, cap. 4)—this interpretation would be possible and would be of special value for a knowledge of the connection of modern philosophy with the speculation of antiquity and of the Middle Ages.

3) *In antiquity.* We say “in antiquity” because—and consequently we arrive again at the foundation of the theory of coincidence (synthesis) of opposites—it is Platonic dialectics which knew how to derive the many from the idea of the good in itself with the aid of division or *diairesis*; it is Platonic dialectics in which the *coincidentia oppositorum* is not on foreign soil—something which we can recognize in the speculation of the mature Plato on ideas and on numbers.

4) *In the Middle Ages.* We say “in the Middle Ages” because this entire epoch in its Neo-Platonic thought-orientation has preserved for us more or less consciously this particular viewpoint. From Pseudo-Dionysius Cusanus appropriated the comparison by which the procession of things from the One is contrasted with the procession of numbers from unity. He also derived much material from Eriugena and Thierry of Chartres. Even the work *De Intelligentiis* begins metaphysics with the Infinite; Albert the Great makes being in ever greater variety beget itself from God as the *intellectus universaliter agens*; and even in St. Thomas Aquinas, the absolute with its transcendental infinity in all forms contains everything implicitly—something which in its explicitness is called the *universum*. In the *Summa Theologiae* we read certain phrases which sound very much like Cusanus: *In causa omnium necesse est praewistere omnia secundum naturalem unionem; et sic quae sunt diversa et opposita in se ipsis, in Deo praewistunt ut unum* (S. T., I, 4, 2 ad 1). St. Thomas himself noted the connection of this thought with the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius.

## 2. God

**As complicatio.** In the First Book of *Docta Ignorantia*, Cusanus informs us that God is the *maximum*, fullness absolutely, who loses nothing and who can be neither greater nor smaller. For this reason

God contains within Himself everything that can be seen and thought to be different and varied. He is the *complicatio* of all things, and because they are neither different or varied in Him, He is the *coincidentia oppositorum*. "God is the absolutely simple essence of all essences; in Him all essences that exist, have existed or ever will exist, are contained really and from all eternity" (*Docta Ignorantia*; ed. Meiner, I, 32). In Him man is not in any way different from the animals, nor the heavens from the earth; and in Him we can find nothing that is different or varied (*ibid.*, 49). After the development of this thought such as we have given it, there is no need to expatiate on it any further. By the aid of mathematical reasoning, Cusanus sought to make his ideas more understandable for his readers and his listeners. He shows, for example, how in the infinite, the circumference and the straight line represent opposites (contradictories), but on the other hand how in an infinite circle the curvature is so infinitesimally small that it may be considered almost as non-existent and thus the curved line and the straight coincide. He offers similar examples from triangles and globes.

**The world as explication.** 1) *Multiplicity.* The world must naturally be grasped mentally as an *explicatio* of God. The Second Book of the *Docta Ignorantia* treats of this. The world is through God, from Him, and in Him. Just as a number evolves from out the *Monas*, so the world with its multiplicity is derived from God. Precisely in this thought which Cusanus borrowed from Pseudo-Dionysius we can readily discern his Platonism.

2) *Wholeness.* For this reason the world is a whole and is composed of wholes; each is in every other (*quodlibet in quolibet*), because God is all in all. This thought will be revived again in the Renaissance. But Cusanus did not intend it to be understood in this sense: with him it did not mean that the individual in its individuality is absorbed and becomes unimportant, as pantheism later assumed. On the contrary, the individual must exist and without it there could be no whole. The individual represents in its species and in its autonomous reality the spirit and the essence of the whole, and precisely by it the *universum* is reduced to a unity, receives its coherence, form, truth, and knowability. Again it is the concept of participation which preserves both notions: the individual and the whole.

**Pantheism?** At various times students have affirmed that Cusanus advocated pantheism, but this is not true. Pantheism tries to under-

stand the universe as God; Cusanus, however, as Hoffmann has pointed out, tried to understand it *through* God. The solution of the problem is to be found in the concept of participation. Cusanus does deny the identification of things and he does maintain that they vary, even though he rejects a separation between God and the world. If the world is the image and the likeness of God, it is truly like Him but not identical with Him. Cusanus made a distinction between similarity and identity. Scholasticism had spoken of an analogy. Cusanus takes up the thought upon which all analogy is based: the concept of participation. In this concept he retains the single antithesis which he did not intend to discard but only to strengthen, namely, the opposition between origin and result, between a measure and the thing measured, between creator and creature.

**Speculation and the natural sciences.** The philosophical speculation of Cusanus on the infinite, on ignorance, on the one and the many, contributed to an entirely concrete enrichment of both the natural sciences and their methods. If all reality is individual and unique, and if the universe is also infinite even though "contracted," it follows that there are no two things alike, that the earth does not form the center of the world, that it is in fact no such center, that the sphere of the fixed stars is not the ultimate limit of the universe, that our earth is but a star among other stars, and every point is a "center," because everywhere the eternal whole is filled with activity in the same fashion. Consequently Cusanus becomes the forerunner of Copernicus, and his mathematical method of numbering, measuring, and weighing which he introduced into the natural sciences anticipates the spirit of Kepler. His "Experiments with a Scale" do not advance beyond the range of his speculation. The philosopher of conjectural knowledge surmised that nothing in this world could ever arrive at perfect exactness, but "results of the scales come closest to the truth" (*De Stat. Exp.*; ed. Meiner, 119). Plato had also been conscious of the fact that in mathematics we have the straight way to the truths of the ideal order. And after Cusanus had measured the world thoroughly by means of the idea, he reduced everything to its correct proportions. He demanded that the pulse be gauged by a watch, that the healthy be separated from the sick by means of a scale, and that the specific weights of metals be established by the same means. He himself did not live to see the results of such methods in the field of natural sciences, but he was fully aware of their possibilities.

## 3. MAN

**Christ the way.** In the Third Book of *Docta Ignorantia* Cusanus treats of man. He wanted to establish the way to the absolute. The way he found leads there through Christ. In Him the idea of mankind became man, so that through Him more might be enabled to rediscover the divine to which they had been called and through which they could alone become truly men. In these thoughts the basic position of Cusanus' reasoning is contained. To be absorbed into the infinite had always been the concern of mysticism.

**The cult of the individual.** But to the idea of the universal Eckhart added the cult of the individual. He recognized an ego archetype in the mind of God, of which we must never lose sight, because by it we can reach our ideal being and succeed in obtaining "selfness." In Cusanus this thought is seized upon eagerly and developed still further. By so doing he again contributed in a special way to the development of German philosophy. To him the individual is a microcosm in contrast to the macrocosm. In the individual are to be found creative power, freedom, and spontaneity. The individual thus becomes a substantial subject in his uniqueness and autonomy. A true world in miniature! Just as the multiplicity of forces in the macrocosm are held together by the uniform idea of the whole, so above the individuality of a particular person stands the idea of his better ego, so that life in this world may not deteriorate into chance, fate, meaninglessness, and caprice.

**The pure man.** By it man is raised high above the world and its matter, and in this way he is brought to himself. Thus man lives out his life in this world by means of a God-given freedom that is guided by a supertemporal idea, but he does not trace his origin to it. He seeks to give it form and this from a higher plane. His ego is here more than the consciousness of a highly developed intellectual animal. This ego must be conceived much differently. As Hoffmann puts it, "The purely formed ego 'is' no longer a part of the natural world, but 'has' a part in the world of ideas. If the idea should be truly indivisible and eternal, the way would indeed be broken for the first time for the idea that our true personality on earth is posited in the ego." If later on Kant would busy himself trying to prove that the moral act of practical reason is free of everything "material," so that man may develop himself on his own initiative, we must say that Cusanus had already anticipated him.

## 4. LATER INFLUENCE

**France and Italy.** We must maintain in the first place that Cusanus accomplished much more in France and in Italy than he did in Germany. In France the idea behind the *De Docta Ignorantia* was further developed by Bovillus down to Sanchez and Gassendi. Gassendi was, as is now known, oriented in the direction of the negative scepticism after the fashion of Montaigne and Charron. Since Descartes himself later traversed this same terrain, the positive elements in the speculation of Cusanus died a natural death. In Italy, Marsilio and Pico della Mirandola were indebted to him for their inspiration. Mirandola also spoke of the infinite dignity of the individual which is mirrored in his creative activity, his freedom, and his individuality. Whereas to Cusanus the activity of man is regulated by a supreme meaningful idea, Mirandola perceived only the infinite dynamic of a human Demiurge and permitted him to become master of himself. To Cusanus, Christ is the Lord. Giordano Bruno, on the contrary, fully paganized Cusanus and, what is worse, popularized him. By way of Bruno, Paraclesus, and Leibniz, the thoughts of Cusanus manifested themselves later in German philosophy.

**Germany.** After his death, the times were not propitious for him because of the religious struggles and the political upheavals which had taken place. Later, however, his ideas evolved, as we have seen, into the definite beginnings of Germany philosophy. As E. Hoffmann said, "Cusanus lived during the autumn of the Middle Ages and can be understood from the cultural-historical viewpoint and from the philosophico-historical viewpoint only by means of the epoch itself; but considered purely from the problematic-historical viewpoint these declining years, this autumn of speculation was much more fertile than the subsequent seasons of the exuberant spring tide of the Renaissance or the sated summer of the age of Enlightenment. Perhaps we will have to experience another autumnal season before, philosophically speaking, a state of problematic again arises in which the chief positions of Cusanus can again be revived." There are panegyrists of modern philosophy who see in Scholasticism nothing but the shades of night, and disciples of Scholasticism who see in modern philosophy nothing but the failure of error. The study of the philosophy of Cusanus could make both parties realize how on the opposite side a truly great system can be found, and could thus lead them better to understand themselves and others.

## INDEX OF NAMES

Abelard, Peter, 364 ff; ethical views, 368 ff; influence of, 370; intention in the moral act, 369; life and works, 364; metaphysical scepticism, 366; problem of universals, 360 f

Academicians, 258 ff; 270, 444

Academy, 2; and Aristotle, 134 ff, 203, 215 f; eclecticism and scepticism of, 261; middle, scepticism of, 259; new, 313; old, 123 f; and Plato, 96, 123; and Pythagoreanism, 132 f; young, 311

Adam Pulchrae Mulieris, and metaphysics of light, 388 f

Aegidius, *see* Giles of Rome

d'Ailly, Peter, scepticism of, 479

Albert, St., ambition in philosophy, 394; and Aristotelianism, 396 f; chief principles of, 396 f; on the foundation of being, 397; and German mysticism, 399; on God's nature, 397; life, 395; and metaphysics of light, 397; as a natural scientist, 398 f; and Neo-Platonism, 397; on problem of universals, 397; on substantiality of the soul, 397 f; writings, 395 f

Albert of Saxony, and natural science, 480

Albinus of Madaura, philosophy of, 266

Alciabides, and Socrates, 49

Alcidames, on law, 44

Alcmaeon of Croton, member of the older Pythagorean brotherhood, 14

Alcuin, and Carolingian Renaissance, 357

Alexander of Aphrodisias, exegete of Aristotle, 263; materialistic interpretation of Aristotle, 263; on *nous poetikos*, 155

Alexander of Hales, chief views of, 390; founder of older Franciscan School, 390

Alexandria, catechetical school of, 291

Alexandrianism, in history of philosophy, viii

Alfarabi, hybrid of Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic ideas, 376

Algazel, on religion and philosophy, 377

Amalric of Bénes, and Eriugena, 358; pantheism of, 373

Amelius, 278

Ammonius Saccas, founder of Neo-Platonism, 271

Amyntas, King of Macedonia, 134

Anaxagoras, 37 ff; character of, 37; contrasted with Democritus, 38; on forma-

tion of the world, 39 f; original contributions of, 39; on presence of reason throughout nature, 38 f; on source of motion, 39; on ultimate elements of reality, 37 f

Anaximander, 11 ff; and the Boundless as the first principle of being, 12; compared with Thales, 12; on the formation of the world, 12 f

Anaximenes, on air as first principle, 13

Andronicus of Rhodes, assembler of Aristotle's writings, 263

Anesidemus, sceptic, 262

Angelo of Arezzo, 456

Anniceris, 62

Anselm of Besati, 359

Anselm of Canterbury, St., 360 ff; argument for existence of God, 361 f; concept of truth, 363; critique of, 362; on faith and reason, 361; life and works, 360; and St. Augustine, 361

Antidialecticians, 293, 359 f, 374

Antiochus of Ascalon, eclecticism of, 261; representative of New Academy, 259

Antiphon of Athens, 41; and law, 44, 265

Antisthenes of Athens, founder of the Cynics, 57; sensualism and materialism of, 58 f

Antoninus Pius, 234

Antonius Andreeae, 463

Apollodorus, an early Epicurean, 245

Apollonius of Tyana, a Neo-Pythagorean, 266

Apologists, 291 f

Apuleius of Madaura, philosophy of, 266

Aquinas, *see* Thomas Aquinas, St.

Arabian philosophy, 375 ff

Arat of Soloi, an early Stoic, 217

Arcesilaus, representative of Middle Academy, 259; scepticism of, 259

Archimedes, 376

Archytas of Tarentum, member of younger Pythagorean brotherhood, 15

Aristarchus of Samos, astronomer and peripatetic, 262; on revolution of earth, 15

Aristides, apologist and philosopher, 291; early Christian philosopher, 298

Aristippus of Cyrene, founder of Cyrenaic school, 59

Aristotle, and abstraction, 155 ff; and

active intellect, 155; among the Syrians, 375; on analogy of being, 169 f; on Anaxagoras, 38; and Boethius, 337; categories of being, 142; on chance, 178 f; concept of form, 165; concept of metaphysics, 158 f; concept of world, 187 ff; contrasted with Plato, 145; criticism of Democritus, 35 f; critique of Platonic Republic, 209 f; critique of Plato's theory of ideas, 163; on deduction and induction, 147 f; and definition, 140 f; on desire, 185; direct translations from Greek, 380 f; distinction between philosophy and myth, 7; on efficient cause, 171 ff; on emotions and affections, 185 f; as empiricist, 157; epistemological apriorism, 149 ff; on essence of motion, 172; on essence of soul, 181 ff; on eternity of world, 189 f; ethics and politics of, 198 ff; on first and second substance, 145 f; on first substance, 161 ff; founds Lyceum, 134; on genus and species, 141 f; on God, 192 ff; on golden mean, 202 f; hedonism, 200 f; on Heraclitus, 18; hylemorphic theory, origin of, 165 ff; on idea as number in Plato, 94; on immortality of soul, 187; influence on Patristic philosophy, 293 f; influence on Stoics, 226; interpretation of Plato's cosmology, 123; on judgment, 143 ff; on kinds of soul, 184 ff; on kinds of state, 212 f; on knowledge and science, 139 ff; life, 134 ff; on matter, 169 ff; on the moral principle, 198 ff; naturalistic explanation of, 263; on nature of God, 194 ff; Neo-Platonic commentaries on, 376; new notion of reality, 163 f; on non-sensible knowledge, 155; notion of concept, 140 ff; on the *Nous*, 155; on the origin of ideal theory, 96 f; on the origin of motion, 171 ff; on origin of soul, 186 f; on origin of state, 207 f; on place, 190; on potency and act, 174 ff; on principle, 159 f; on principle of causality, 172 f; on principle of knowledge, 152 ff; principle of individuation, 168; on privation, 170; on prudence and right reason, 201 f; on purpose in nature, 178 ff; on purpose of state, 206 f; on Pythagorean metaphysics, 16; reception given by twelfth-century Scholastics, 375 ff; on relativism of Heraclitus, 20 f; and science, 151 ff; on second substance, 164 f; on sensation, 154 f; on Socrates' contribution to a theory of knowledge, 50; solution to the dilemma of Parmenides, 26; solution to problem of becoming, 170; on the soul, 181 ff; on the source of knowl-

edge, 150 ff, 154; on species of motion, 171 ff; on substance, 160 f; and syllogism, 146 ff; on Thales, 9 f; on time, 190 f; on truth, 144; on unity of soul, 186; on Unmoved Mover, 176 f; on virtue, 203 ff; on virtue in Socrates, 53; on will, 205 ff; writings of, 136 ff; writings prohibited, 382 f; on Xenophanes, 21; on Zeno, 27

Aristoxenus of Tarentum, an older Peripatetic, 213

Arnobius, early Christian philosopher, 299

Asclepius, 278

Athenagoras, apologist and philosopher, 291

Atomists, 299

Attic philosophy, 47 ff

Atticus, philosophy of, 266

Augustine, St., 310 ff; arguments for existence of God, 318 ff; arguments for immortality of the soul, 327 f; attitude toward philosophy, 292; and Roger Bacon, 388; on basic principle of morality, 329 f; on creation, 321 ff; on essence of truth, 317 f; on eternal law, 329 f; on eternity, 323; ethical apriorism, 331 f; ethical views of, 329 ff; on form, 324 f; on freedom 330; on God, 318 ff; on God's essence, 320 ff; on God's will as principle of morality, 330; on happiness, 332 ff; on ideas, 324; on immateriality of the soul, 327; influence on St. Anselm, 361; influence on St. Thomas, 409; life, 310 f; on man's nature, 325 f; on matter, 322 f; on moral action, 331 f; on natural law, 329 f; on nature of truth, 314; on origin of soul, 328 f; on origin of state, 334; on the Platonists, 294; political philosophy, 334 ff; on primacy of will, 331; on *rationes seminales*, 324 f; on sensation, 314 f; on the soul, 325 ff; on the source of truth, 314 ff; on substantiality of the soul, 326 f; theory of illumination, 315 f; on time, 323 f; on truth, 313 ff; on union of soul and body, 325 f; works of, 311 f

Augustinianism, among the older Franciscans, 389 ff

Augustus, Emperor, 234, 238, 246

Avencebrol, chief views of, 378

Averroës, chief thoughts of, 377

Averroists, meaning of term, 453; principal teachings of, 453

Avicebron, 378

Avicenna, principal positions of, 376 f

Baader, Franz, 472

Bacon, Francis, 387, 481

Bacon, Roger, 387 ff; character and works,

387; and St. Augustine, 388; and scientific method, 387 f

Baeumker, C., 389, 447

Barth, Karl, 240

Bartholomew of Messina, translator of Aristotle, 380

Basil, St., attitude toward philosophy, 292; on creation, 302 f; early Christian philosopher, 298

Basilides, a gnostic, 298

Baumgartner, M., 439

Bede the Venerable, importance of, 352

Bentham, Jeremy, 60

Berengarius of Tours, 359

Berkeley, George, 222

Bernard of Chartres, and mediaeval humanism, 371 f

Bernard of Clairvaux, St., on wisdom, 373

Bernold of Constance, 364

Berthold of Mosburg, 399

Biel, Gabriel, nominalist, 479

Boethius, and Aristotle, 337; definition of person, 345; and doctrine of the *kathekon*, 231; on eternity, 343; on fate, 342; on freedom, 342; on God's nature, 338 f; on individual responsibility, 345 f; life and works, 336 f; and Plato, 337 f; on problem of universals, 340 f; on providence, 342; solution to problem of evil, 344 f; and Stoics, 338; on theory of participation, 341; on time, 343; varied influences on, 337 f

Boethius of Dacia, Latin Averroist, 456

Bonaventure, St., on abstraction, 393; advocate of Augustinian tradition, 391 f; on Anselmian argument for God's existence, 392; on first matter, 392 f; life, 391; on nature of soul, 393 f; on origin of world, 392; on our knowledge of God, 392; plurality of forms, 393; and St. Thomas, 409; and theory of illumination, 393; on union of soul and body, 394

Bovillus, 494

Bradwardine, Thomas, 463

Brentano, C., 332

Bruno, Giordano, 494

Burgundio of Pisa, 352

Buridan, John, and natural science, 480

Burleigh, Walter, 463

Burnet, John, 23

Cajetan, Thomas, a Thomist, 451

Calippus, 188

Callicles, a Sophist, 41; might makes right, 45

Cano, Melchior, a Thomist, 451

Cappadocians, 298; attitude toward philosophy, 292; on God's nature, 302

Capreolus, a Thomist, 451

Carneades, critical spirit of, 260; representative of Middle Academy, 259

Carolingian Renaissance, 357

Cassiodorus, pupil of Boethius, 352

Cato, order to expel philosophers from Rome, 260

Celsus, philosophy of, 266

Cerinthus, gnostic, 298

Chalcidius, commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, 299

Charlemagne, 357

Charron, 494

Chartres, school of, and mediaeval humanism, 370 ff

Christianity, and Stoicism, 234 f; youthful, in its relation to philosophy, 289 ff

Chrysippus, an early Stoic, 217; on freedom and fate, 241 f; on immortality, 230; on natural law, 233

Cicero, eclectic, 261; importance of, 261; influenced by Panaetius, 218; influence on St. Augustine, 292

Claudius Ptolemaius, a Peripatetic, 263

Cleanthes of Assos, on immortality, 230; successor to Zeno, 217

Clement of Alexandria, St., and catechetical school of Alexandria, 291; on creation in time, 302; on creation and world of ideas, 302; early Christian philosopher, 298

Cohen, 23

Constantius Africanus, 371

Copernicus, 262, 480, 492

Cornelius Labeo, 299

Crates, a Cynic, 59; and Old Academy, 132

Cratylus, absolute relativist, 20

Critias, might makes right, 45; on religion, 44; a Sophist, 41

Critolaus, Peripatetic, 262

Crotone, center of older Pythagorean brotherhood, 14

Cusanus, *see* Nicholas of Cusa

Cynics, 57 ff; influence on the Stoics, 50 f, 226

Cyrenaics, 59 f

Damian, Peter, *see* Peter Damian

Dante, 195

Darwin, Charles, and Aristotle, 189, 350; descent of species, 93; and ideas, 93; and natural selection, 179

David of Dinant, alleged pantheism of, 373

da Vinci, Leonardo, 480

de la Mare, William, 450 ff

Demetrius of Phaleron, an older Peripatetic, 213

Democritus, 32 ff; accomplishments of,

32 f; the atom, 33; concept of empty space, 34; concept of motion or change, 34 f; contrasted with Anaxagoras, 38; idealism in ethics, 36 f; and mechanistic study of nature, 35; theory of knowledge, 36

Denifle, H., 472

de Torquemada, Juan, Cardinal, 449

De Wulf, Maurice, 405, 456

Dialecticians, of ninth century, 359 f

Diciarchus of Messene, an older Peripatetic, 213

Dietrich of Freiberg, 399

Diocles, 132

Diodorus Cronus, a Socratic of the Megarian school, 57

Diogenes Laertius, 3, 236, 238

Diogenes of Sinope, a Cynic, 59

Dion, 63

Dionysius the Carthusian, 346

Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, *see* Pseudo-Areopagite

Dominicans, 384, 394 ff, 464

Dominic Soto, 451

Dominicus Gundissalinus, 379

Duns Scotus, *see* Scotus

Durandus, 479

Eckhart, Master, ethical views of, 469 ff; on existence of God, 468; on ideas, 467 f; influence of, 471 f; life, 464 f; and mysticism, 466; on nature of God, 466 f; and Neo-Platonism, 465 f; and Scholasticism, 466; works, 465

Eccphantus, member of younger Pythagorean brotherhood, 15

Eleatics, 21 ff; and problem of the one and the many, 91

Elis-Eretrians, 57

Empedocles, on cause of motion, 30; on the first principle of all things, 29 f; on formation of world, 31; four elements of, 125; Orphic-Pythagorean views of, 31; theory of knowledge, 31 f

Epictetus, on apathy, 238 f; on freedom, 240; on immortality, 230; representative of later Stoia, 218; on Universal Reason, 233

Epicureanism, 245 ff; influence on Platonic philosophy, 293

Epicureans, atomism of, 249; attack on religious myths, 252 f; concept of ataraxy, 254; concept of chance, 250 f; concept of moderation, 257; concept of wisdom, 258; criterion of truth, 240 f; definition of philosophy, 247; ethical teachings, 253 ff; on fate and freedom, 251 ff; hedonism, 253 f; mechanistic view of becoming, 249 f; on pleasure, 255; on prudence, 255; sensualism of, 247; sensualistic ethics, 255 f; teaching on friendship, 257 f; teachings on logic, 246 ff

Epicurus of Samos, founder of Epicureanism, 245; on the goal of life, 254

Eriugena, John Scotus, alleged pantheism of, 358 f; concept of God, 358; concept of philosophy, 359; Neo-Platonism of, 357 f

Eubulides, a Socratic of the Megarian school, 57

Euclid of Megara, 57

Eudemus of Rhodes, an older Peripatetic, 213

Eudonius, and Aristotle, 188; and Plato, 72, 73

Eusebius of Caesarea, 295, 296

Eusebius of Vercelli, 295

Fichte, J. G., vii, 489

Franciscan School, older, 389 ff

Francis of Mayronis, 346, 463

Frederick II of Prussia, 238

Fulbert of Chartres, 370

Gaius, philosophy of, 266

Galen, physician and Peripatetic, 263

Galileo, 121, 386, 480

Gallienus, Emperor, 271

Garrigou-Lagrange, R., 409

Gassendi, 246, 494

Gaunilo, critique of St. Anselm's argument, 362

Gerard of Cremona, 379

Gerbert of Rheims (Pope Sylvester II), and problem of universals, 365

Gerson, John, nominalist, 479

Gilbert de la Porree, and mediaeval humanism, 372

Giles of Rome, 363, 421

Gilson, E., on place of St. Thomas, 400

Giordanus, Emperor, 271

Gnostics, 298 f

Goethe, and Aristotle, 195; and Empedocles, 30; and Epicureans, 256; and St. Augustine, 334

Gorgias, scepticism of, 43; a Sophist, 40 f

Grabmann, M., 300, 310, 364, 370, 381, 383, 406, 453, 466

Gratian, 370

Gregory of Nazianzen, St., attitude toward philosophy, 292; early Christian philosopher, 298

Gregory of Nyssa, St., attitude toward philosophy, 292; early Christian philosopher, 298; on immateriality of soul, 306; on the soul, 306

Gregory of Rimini, nominalist, 479

Grosseteste, Robert, on God's nature, 386 f; life, 385; metaphysics of light, 385 f; and Neo-Platonism, 385 f; theory of knowledge, 386; translator of Aristotle, 380

Grotius, Hugo, 44, 112, 449

Hadrian, 234, 238

Hartmann, N., 168, 435

Hegel, Georg, vi, 25, 84, 279, 325, 372, 472

Hegesias, 60

Heirc of Auxerre, 365

Heisenberg, on Pythagoreans, 17

Hellenism, nature of, 216

Henricus Aristippus, 380

Henry of Brussels, 456

Henry of Ghent, opposition to St. Thomas, 450

Henry Suso, 471

Heraclides of Pontus, member of younger Pythagorean brotherhood, 15; and old Academy, 132

Heraclitus, 18 ff; all things are in a state of flux, 18; basic principle of, 18 f; on being as an unfolding and display of opposites, 19; contrasted with Parmenides, 25 f; influence on Stoics, 226; on Logos as law governing change and becoming, 19 f; on natural law, 233; not an absolute relativist, 20; and problem of the one and the many, 91; on Pythagoras, 14; sense world in state of flux, and Plato, 78; vs. Heracliteans, 20 f

Herman the German, 379

Hermes Trismegistus, influence of, 266

Hermias of Atarneus, 134

Hertling, Georg von, 326, 434

Hervaeus Natalis, Thomist, 451

Hesiod, mythology of, 5 f

Hicetas of Syracuse, member of younger Pythagorean brotherhood, 15

Hippias of Elis, a Sophist, 40; on law, 44

Hippocrates, 371, 376

Hobbes, T., 119, 335

Hoffmann, E., 2, 145, 252, 256, 262, 381, 481, 483, 492, 493, 494

Holkot, Robert, nominalist, 479

Homer, mythology of, 4 f

Honorius III, Pope, condemnation of Eriugena, 358

Honorius of Autun, 121

Horace, 238, 246, 257

Hugh of St. Victor, spirit of, 374

Hugo Ripelin, 399

Hume, D., and Aristotle, 156, 162, 261, 314; and Plato, 82

Iamblichus, influence on St. Augustine, 278

Ibn Sina, *see* Avicenna

Innocent III, on freedom in philosophy, 283

Ionia, the cradle of Greek philosophy, 9

Isidore of Seville, 352, 447; importance of, in Middle Ages, 352

Jaeger, W., 45, 136, 225, 326, 338, 381, 427

James of Douay, 456

James of Venice, 336

Jaspers, Karl, 282

Jerome, St., on Plato and Philo, 295

Jewish philosophy, 378 f

John Damascene, St., and Aristotelianism, 294; importance of, 352

John of Jandun, 456

John of La Rochelle, chief views of, 390 f

John Peckham, opposition to St. Thomas, 400

John Philoponus, and Aristotelianism, 294

John Quidort, Thomist, 451

John Regina, Thomist, 451

John of Salisbury, importance of, 377 f

John of Tambach, 399

Julian the Apostate, 218

Justin, Emperor, 2, 216

Justin Martyr, St., apologist and philosopher, 291; early Christian philosopher, 298; judgment of ancient philosophy, 290

Kant, I., apriorism of, contrasted with Plato, 82

Karrer, O., 466

Kepler, J., 492

Kilwardby, Robert, opposition to St. Thomas, 450

Klaces, absolute relativist, 20

Koch, J., 466

Lacombe, G., 381

Lactantius, apologist and philosopher, 291; early Christian philosopher, 299

Laelius, 218

Lambert of Auxerre, mediaeval logician, 452

Lampsacus, 37

Leibniz, G. W., 84, 285, 314, 345, 362, 457, 489, 494

Leisegang, H., 277

Leucippus, a typical atomist and materialist, 32

*Liber de Causis*, 376

Locke, J., 34, 156, 165, 222, 437

Longinus, 296  
 Lotze, R. H., and Plato, 85  
 Lucretius Carus, important source for our knowledge of Epicureanism, 245 f  
 Lull, Raymond, younger Franciscan School, 457  
 Luther, Martin, 322, 471, 479  
 Lyceum, founded by Aristotle, 134  
 Lychetus, Francis, 463

Macchiavelli, 120  
 Macrobius, early Christian philosopher, 299  
 Maier, A., 480  
 Maimonides, chief views of, 379  
 Mani, gnostic, 298  
 Marcion, gnostic, 298  
 Marcus Aurelius, on apathy, 238; on freedom, 240; on immortality, 230; representative of later Stoa, 218; on Stoic ideal of human virtue, 237 f; on Universal Reason, 234  
 Maritain, J., on value of mediaeval philosophy, 286  
 Marius Victorinus, early Christian philosopher, 299  
 Marsilius of Inghen, 479  
 Marsilius of Padua, 456, 482, 494  
 Marston, Roger, younger Franciscan School, 457  
 Martianus Capella, early Christian philosopher, 299  
 Matthew of Aquasparta, criticism of St. Thomas, 449; theory of knowledge, 457  
 Maurer, A. A., 416, 420  
 Maurice a Porter, 463  
 Maximus the Confessor, a commentator on Pseudo-Areopagite, 352  
 Maximus of Tyre, philosophy of, 266  
 Mechanists, 29 ff  
 Megarians, 57  
 Menedem, Socratic of Elis-Eretrian School, 57  
 Menoeceus, 254, 255  
 Menon, an older Peripatetic, 213  
 Methodius, 295  
 Metrodorus of Lampsacus, an early Epicurean, 245  
 Meyer, H., 300, 410, 414, 446  
 Michael Scotus, 379  
 Middle Platonists, influence on Patristic philosophy, 295 f  
 Milesian philosophers, 9 ff  
 Minucius Felix, apologist and philosopher, 291; attitude toward ancient philosophy, 290; early Christian philosopher, 299  
 Mirecourt, John, nominalist, 479  
 Montaigne, 494  
 Mucius Scaevola, 132, 218

Mulligan, R. W., 409  
 Musonius Rufus, 294

Natorp, P., and Plato, 81  
 Nausiphanes, teacher of Epicurus, 245  
 Nemesius of Emesa, early Christian philosopher, 298; on unity of soul, 306  
 Neo-Kantianism, and ideas, 83; and Plato, 81; and Plotinus, 270 f  
 Neo-Platonic Schools, 278  
 Neo-Platonism, 265 ff; and Eckhart, 465 f; in Eriugena, 357 ff; and Robert Grosseteste, 385 ff; influence on Patristic philosophy, 296; as interpreted by Proclus, 278 f; not true Platonism, rather Plotinianism, 270; in Pseudo-Areopagite, 347; and St. Albert, 397; in St. Thomas, 415; varied influences on, 265 f, 270; vitality of, 270  
 Neo-Pythagoreans, 266 f; basic views of, 266 f; influence on Patristic philosophy, 296  
 Neo-Scholastics, and Aristotle, 144, 150, 402, 416  
 Nero, 234  
 Nestorians, 294  
 Nicholas of Autrecourt, critical spirit of, 479  
 Nicholas of Cusa, 481 ff; alleged pantheism, 491 f; on *coincidentia oppositorum*, 489 f; components of his philosophy, 481; *docta ignorantia*, 485 f; epistemological apriorism, 487 ff; influence on succeeding philosophers, 494; life, 481 f; on man's knowledge of God, 485; on mysticism, 487; on nature of God, 490; on nature of man, 493; on nature of one, 487 f; on nature of sense knowledge, 488; on nature of soul, 488; on nature of world, 491; theory of knowledge, 484 ff; on theory of participation, 488; writings, 483  
 Nicholas of Oresme, and natural science, 480  
 Nicholas of Paris, mediaeval logician, 452  
 Nicomachus of Gerasa, a Neo-Pythagorean, 266  
 Nicostratus, philosophy of, 266  
 Nietszche, absolute relativist, 20; on Parmenides, 23  
 Nigidius Figulus, a Neo-Pythagorean, 266  
 Nominalists, 479  
 Norden, E., 266  
 Numenius of Apamea, philosophy of, 266

Ockham, William, on experience as source of knowledge, 475; life and works, 473 f; nominalism of, 475 f; on omnipotence of God, 477 f; on primacy of

individual, 476 f; solution to problem of universals, 475; theory of knowledge, 475 ff; on will of God, 478 f

Odo of Turin, and problem of universals, 365

Olivi, Peter John, 457

Olympiodorus, 278

Origen, on creation, 302; on God's essence, 302; on the Logos, 304; philosophical importance, 298; philosophical views of, 291; on soul as spirit, 306; on union of body and soul, 307

Orphic doctrine, 6 f; and Pythagoras, 14

Otto of Freising, and introduction of Aristotelian logic into Germany, 373

Oxford, school of, 384 f

Pachymeres, 350

Panaetius of Rhodes, and catechetical school of Alexandria, 291; on immortality, 230; representative of middle Stoa, 47 f

Paracelsus, 494

Parmenides, arguments against becoming, 24; being alone is, 22; contrasted with Heraclitus, 25 f; foremost representative of Eleatic philosophy, 22; on identity of thought and being, 23; on sense experience, 25; on unity of being, 23 ff; the "way of opinion," 22 ff, 26

Pascal, B., 332

Paschasius Radbertus, and Carolingian Renaissance, 356

Patristic philosophy, beginnings of, 298 ff; chief topics contained in, 300 ff; on creation, 302 f; emphasis on unity, individuality, and substantiality of the soul, 306; end of, 351 f; on essence of God, 301 f; on existence of God, 301; on immortality, 307; on the Logos, 303 ff; moral teachings, 308 f; on relation between faith and knowledge, 300 f; sources of, 293 ff; teaching on man, 305; teaching on the soul, 306 f

Paul, St., on the rights of natural reason, 290

Pelster, A., 381

Pergamon School, 278

Pericles, 2

Peripatetics, Older, 213 f; origin of term, 135; principles of, 262 ff

Peter Aureolus, 479

Peter Damian, St., opposition to philosophy, 380; "philosophy the handmaid of theology," 282 f

Peter John Olivi, younger Franciscan School, 457

Peter of Spain (Pope John XXI), mediæval logician, 453

Phaedrus, an early Epicurean, 245

Phaido of Elis, and Elis-Eretrian School, 57

Philip of Macedonia, 134

Philip of Opus, 65, 132

Philo of Alexandria, allegorical interpretation of religion, 268; concept of matter, 268; influence on early Christians, 291; influences on Patristic philosophy, 295; on God's nature, 268; rapprochement between Hellenism and Judaism, 267; speculation on the Logos, 268

Philo of Larissa, representative of New Academy, 259

Philodemus of Gadara, an early Epicurean, 245

Philolaus, ancient astronomer and member of older Pythagorean brotherhood, 14

Pico della Mirandola, 494

Plato, 61 ff; on the absolute, 88 ff; against Protagoras, 59; allegory of the Cave, 87 f; on Antisthenes, 58; apriorism of, contrasted with Kant, 82; and apriori truths, 79; basis of apriorism, 79 f; on basis of state, 120 f; on being and good, 70 f; and Boethius, 337 f; concept of philosophy, 61; contrasted with Aristotle, 145; cosmology of, 121 ff; criticism of Sophists, 42; dialectics of, 89 ff; epistemological apriorism, 78 f; on essence of soul, 101 ff; and eudaemonism, 73 f; on existence of God, 127 ff; on formation of world, 122 ff; on forms of state, 117 ff; founds Academy, 62; on God, 127 ff; on God as *Anhypotheton*, 91; on God and man, 130 f; on God's essence, 129; on the good, 57 ff; and hedonism, 72 ff; on Heraclitus, 18 f; on ideas as number, 94 ff; on immortality, 110 f; influenced by Pythagorean doctrines, 62; influence on Aristotle, 167 f; influence on Patristic philosophy, 294 f; influence on Stoics, 226; and innate ideas, 79; as interpreted by Neo-Platonists, 270 f; life, 61 ff; on Logos as foundational basis of being, 90 f; on man's nature, 99 ff; on matter, 125 ff; on meaning of idea, 92 ff; on mind as source of truth, 78 f; and the *mundus intelligibilis*, 84 ff; on the nature of truth, 76 ff; on objective reality of ideas, 82 ff; on the one and the many, 91 f; on origin of soul, 100 f; on origin of state, 112; participation and theory of knowledge, 81; on philosopher-kings, 115 f; on pleasure in the moral life, 72 ff; and problem of evil, 75 f; on problem of evil, 129 f; on Pythagoras, 14; and Pythagoreans, 95; and real character of ideas, 84 ff; on religion, 131; and science, 86 f; and

sensation, 77 f; on sensation and reasoning, 80 f; on sense knowledge as opinion, 82; on soul as principle of life, 103 ff; on source of knowledge, 154; on the source of truth, 77 ff; on space and time, 126 f; on the state, 112 ff; theory of ideas, 82 ff; on transmigration of souls, 105 ff; on tripartite nature of soul, 101 f; on unchangeable character of intellectual knowledge, 82 f; on union of body and soul, 99 f; and the universals, 365; and wisdom, 86 f; writings of, 63 ff

Platonism, see also Plato, 270 ff, 303, 308, 317, 320, 326, 328, 332, 339 f, 350-351, 352, 397, 417, 418, 423, 435, 460, 476, 481, 482, 491

Plotinus, concept of emanation, 273 f; ethical thought of, 277 f; on God's nature, 272 f; influence on Patristic philosophy, 296; life, 271 f; on matter and the sensible world, 276 f; on the Nous, 275; on the One, 272 f, 276; writings of, 272

Plutarch, philosophy of, 266

Poincaré, H., on the continuity of human thought, viii

Polemon, and Old Academy, 132

Porphyry, on genus, species, and definition, 142; renowned Neo-Platonist, 278

Poseidonius, on immortality, 230

Poseidonius of Apamea, representative of middle Stoa, 217 f

Prantl, 222

Proclus, influence of, 278; interpretation of Neo-Platonism, 278 f; Neo-Platonist, 278; philosophy of identity, 278 f

Prodicus, a Sophist, 40; on religion, 44

Prosper of Aquitaine, and development of *Books of Sentences*, 352

Protagoras of Abdera, on the art of rhetoric, 41; "man the measure of all things," 40; no universal truths, 42; on relativity of knowledge, 59; on religion, 44

Pseudo-Areopagite, Dionysius, on causality, 350 f; on foundation of being, 347 ff; on God's nature, 347; on God as source of all things, 347 f; importance of, 346; influence on Nicholas of Cusa, 486; interpretation of theory of emanation, 348 f; on procession of things from God, 348 f; and return of world to God, 351; and Scholasticism, 349 f; on theory of participation, 348, 350 f

Ptolemaius Logu, 60

Ptolemy of Lucca, Thomist, 451

Pyrro of Elis, scepticism of, 261 f

Pyrhonic scepticism, 261

Pythagoras, general character of, 13 f; and Orphic doctrines, 14

Pythagorean brotherhood, older, 14; two tendencies in, 14 f; younger, 14 f

Pythagoreans, compared with Milesians, 17; on evolution of world, 16 f; influence on Old Academy, 132 f; influence on Plato, 62; influence on Stoics, 225; metaphysics of, 16 ff; and Plato, 95

Pythagorean Way of Life, 15 f

Pythias, 135

Raoul of Brittany, 456

Raphael, 97

Ratrammus, and Carolingian Renaissance, 357

Reginald of Piperno, Thomist, 451

Reitzenstein, 295 f

Remigro de Girolami, 449

Rhabanus Maurus, and Carolingian Renaissance, 357

Richard of Middleton, younger Franciscan School, 457

Roscelin of Compiegne, nominalist, 365

Rowan, M., O. P., 415, 416

Rupert of Deutz, 466

Ruysbroeck, John, 471

Salomon ibn Gebirol, 378

Sanchez, M., 494

Sceptics, 261, 262, 293

Scheler, M., 332, 435

Schelling, F., 489

Schleiermacher, 489

Scholasticism, and Aristotle, 166; concept of, 353 ff; and Cusanus, 481 ff; early, 357 ff; and Eckhart, 466; golden age, 375 ff, 384 ff; method of, 353 f; and Pseudo-Areopagite, 349; and St. Albert, 396; and St. Anselm, 361 ff; and St. Thomas, 400 ff; and Scotus, 457 ff; spirit of, 354 ff

Scipio Africanus Minor, 217, 218

Scotus, on faith and knowledge, 459; general character of, 457 f; on God's existence, 463; on individuation, 461; life and works, 458; on primacy of will, 460; theory of knowledge, 461 f; on univocity of being, 462 f

Seleucus of Seleucia, the "Copernicus of Antiquity," 15

Seneca, representative of later Stoa, 218; on Universal Reason, 233 f

Sextus Empiricus, sceptic, 262

Siger of Brabant, chief elements of his thought, 453 f; on God, 454; later views of, 455 f; monopsychism, 455

Sigismund of Tyrol, 483

Simon of Faversham, 456

Simplicius, 34, 278, 296  
 Siron, an early Epicurean, 245  
 Socrates, 47 ff; and definition, 51; and hedonism, 52 f; and induction, 50 f; on knowledge, 50 ff; life, 48 f; and morality, 52 ff; philosophic method, 48; source problems, 49 f; and universals, 50 f; on virtue, 51  
 Socratics, 56 ff  
 Sophists, 40 ff; concept of might or power, 45 f; concept of natural law, 44 f; objectives of, 41 f; outlook on life, 47 ff; sceptical relativism of, 42 ff; two basic concepts, 42  
 Sophocles, on natural law, 44  
 Soto, Dominic, Thomist, 451  
 Spengler, O., 244  
 Speusippus, and Old Academy, 132, 133  
 Spinoza, B., 25, 26; and Aristotle, 162, 229; and Plato, 77  
 Stalder, H. J., 399  
 Stenzel, 11, 53  
 Stilpo, influence on the Stoics, 57; Socratic of Megarian school, 57  
 Stoia, early, 217; later, 218; middle, 217 f  
 Stobacus, 3  
 Stoicism, and Christianity, 234 f  
 Stoics, 217 ff; on apathy, 238 f; and Boethius, 338; on concept, 221 f; concept of duty, 232; concept of *katorthoma* or right action, 232; concept of the *kathekon* or the suitable, 231; concept of natural law, 232 ff; concept of wise man, 239; on criterion of truth, 220 f; development of syllogism, 222 f; on essence of the soul, 227; on ethical principle, 230 ff; ethical principles of, 227 ff; and eudaemonism in ethics, 235 f; historical influences on development of their philosophy, 226; on immortality, 229 f; on impulses, 227 ff; influenced by Cynics, 58 f; influence on Patristic philosophy, 294; on judgment, 221; on logic, 219 ff; on man's nature, 227 ff; materialism of, 223; on *oikeosis* or true self-love, 230 f; origin or term, 217; pantheism of, 224 f; and seminal principles, 225; seminal seeds, 304; teaching on freedom and fate, 239 ff; teaching on virtue, 235 ff; theory of knowledge, 219 ff; and Universal Reason, 233 f  
 Strato of Lampsacus, leading Peripatetic, 262; materialistic interpretation of Aristotle, 263  
 Suarez, 449  
 Sutton, Thomas, 451  
 Synesius of Cyrene, 278, 293  
 Syrians, and Aristotle, 375  
 Syrian School, 278  
 Tarentum, center of younger Pythagorean brotherhood, 14  
 Tartareetus, Peter, 463  
 Tauler, John, 399, 471  
 Taylor, A. E., 381  
 Tempier, Stephen, of Paris, 450  
 Tertullian, attitude toward Plato and ancient philosophy, 290; on God's essence, 301; importance in philosophy, 299; on the soul, 306  
 Thaddeus of Parma, 456  
 Thales, character of, 9 f; the "father of philosophy," 9; first principle of, 10; hylozoism of, 11  
 Themistius, 376, 381  
 Theodore of Mopsuestia, 375  
 Theodoret of Cyrene, 296, 375  
 Theon of Smyrna, philosophy of, 266  
 Theophrastus, an older Peripatetic, 3, 134, 213, 214, 222, 230, 265, 376  
 Thierry of Chartres, and mediaeval humanism, 372  
 Thomas Aquinas, St., 400 ff; on active intellect, 436 f; on agent intellect, 408; on analogy, 413 f; on act and potency, 419 f; on being and reality, 411 f; on categories of being, 414 f; on creation, 430; on degrees of abstraction, 406; on essence and existence, 420 f; on essence of God, 428 ff; ethical apriorism, 441 f; ethics of, 439 ff; on existence of soul, 432; on faculties of soul, 435; on fidelity to truth, 283; on final cause, 423 ff; on first substance, 416 f; on form, 417 f; on formal object of metaphysics, 412 f; on free will, 443; on *habitus principiorum*, 441 f; on human nature as principle of morality, 440 f; on immateriality of soul, 432; on immortality of soul, 433; on international law, 449; life, 400 f; on meaning of law, 445; metaphysics of, 411 ff; on natural law, 446; on nature of efficient cause, 422 f; on nature of happiness, 444; on nature of human acts, 443 f; on nature of soul, 432 ff; on nature and truth of judgment, 408 f; Neo-Platonic elements in, 415; on origin of soul, 430 f; on origin of state, 447 f; on principle of causality, 421 f; on principles of being, 416 ff; on principles of knowledge, 406 f; proofs for existence of God, 426 ff; on properties of being, 413; on properties of laws, 447; on psychology of knowledge, 435 ff; on purpose of state, 448; on relations between faith and reason, 404 f; and St. Augustine, 409; and St. Bonaventure, 408; on second substance, 417; solution to problem of universals, 418 f; on soul,

431 ff; on source of knowledge, 405 ff; on source of law, 45 f; on *species expressa*, 437 f; on *species intelligibilis*, 436 f; on *species sensibilis*, 436; on substance, 416 ff; on substantiality of soul, 432 f; teleology of, 423 ff; on theory of illumination, 405 f; on theory of knowledge, 404 ff; and theory of participation, 414; on transcendentals of being, 414; on union of soul and body, 433 ff; on value, 444; on value of sense knowledge, 406; on virtue as value, 443; writings, 401 f

Thomas of York, chief views of, 388

Thomists, school of, 451

Thrasyllus, philosophy of, 266

Thrasymachus, a Sophist, 41

Timon of Phlius, a Pyrrhonic sceptic, 216 f

Ulpian, 234

Ulrich of Strasbourg, 395, 399

Valentine, gnostic, 298

Van Steenberghen, 454

Varro, importance of, 261

Victorines, Neo-Platonism of, 374

Virgil, 246

Vittoria, Francis, Thomist, 451

William of Auxerre, 363, 394

William of Champeaux, and problem of universals, 365

William of Conches, and mediaeval humanism, 372

William de la Mare, opposition to St. Thomas, 450; younger Franciscan School, 457

William of Moerbeke, translator of Aristotle, 380

William of Shyreswood, mediaeval logician, 452

Witelo, 389

Wodham, Adam, nominalist, 479

Wolff, Christian, 159

Xenocrates, 123, 132

Xenophanes, critique of ancient mythologies, 21; first of the Eleatics, 21; his insight into the basic unity of the world, 21; a pantheist, 21

Xenophon, on Socrates, 49

Zeno, 26 ff; arguments against motion, 27; founder of dialectics, 27

Zeno of Citium, founder of early Stoicism, 217; on immortality, 229; on natural law, 233

Zeno of Sidon, an early Epicurean, 245

## TOPICAL INDEX

ability, and moral good, in Plato, 68; and understanding, in Socrates, 54; and virtue, in Plato, 67 f

abstraction, in Aristotle, 155 ff; in St. Bonaventure, 393; degrees of, in St. Thomas, 406

accident, in Abelard, 367; in Aristotle, 142; and becoming, 172; and category, 414; as chance, 176; and subject of judgment, 145; and substance, 161, 416 f

action, moral, in St. Augustine, 331 f

active intellect, in Aristotle, 155, 185; origin of, in Aristotle, 186; in St. Thomas, 408, 436 f

active life, for Stoics, 236

activity, artistic, and Socrates, 54; and Stoics, 236 f

act and potency, in Aristotle, 174 ff; in St. Thomas, 419 f

*actus humani*, nature of, in St. Thomas, 443 f

*actus purus*, God, in St. Thomas, 420

aetiology, in St. Thomas, 425

affections, *see* will, emotions

*agere sequitur esse*, 179 f

air, as first principle, 13

allegory, and Bible, in Philo, 268

ambition, and happiness, Plato, 108

analogy, in Aristotle, 160 f; in St. Thomas, 413 f

ancient philosophy, four periods of, 2; importance of, 1 f; sources of 2 f

*Anhypotheton*, God as, in Plato, 91, 128; unconditioned first principle, in Plato, 88 f

apathy, Stoic concept of, 238 f

*Apeiron*, *see* the Boundless and the Unlimited

apodictic, syllogism, in Aristotle, 148

aporia, and Aristotle, 157; in creation, 126 f; and the good, in Plato, 86; philosophical difficulty, in Plato, 64 f; and Plotinus, 274 f; in psychology, 103

aposteriori, epistemological, in St. Thomas, 407

appetite, and happiness, Plato, 74

appetitive faculty, and the good, 73; and happiness, Plato, 69; in Kant, 228; *see also* conation

appropriation, Stoic concept of, 230 f

apriori, by nature, in Aristotle, 149 f

apriorism, epistemological, in Cusanus, 487 ff; in Plato, 78 ff; in St. Thomas, 407 ff

apriorism, ethical, in St. Augustine, 331 f; in St. Thomas, 441 f

apriorism, Platonic, and Aristotelian abstraction, 156 f

*arché*, *see* first principle

*aréte*, *see* virtue

aristocracy, in Aristotle, 212

art, and Aristotle, 152; in education, 113; and end, 178; and idea, in Plato, 91 ff; and moral good, in Socrates, 54; norm of, 114; and St. Thomas, 424

arts, faculty of liberal, 452 f; liberal, in Plato, 113 f, 115; and the universities, 384

asceticism, Pythagorean, 15

aseity, in Aristotle, 194; in Plato, 129; in St. Thomas, 428

assent (approval), in Stoics, 221

astronomy, in education, 114; and Plato, 63

*ataraxy*, among the Pyrrhonic sceptics, 262; freedom from passion, for Epicureans, 254

atheism, answer to, 129 f; and Carneades, 260; and Epicureans, 253; and Plato, 131; and Pre-Socratics, 128

atom, of Democritus, its nature, 33 f

atomism, influence on Epicureans, 249

attributes of God, in St. Augustine, 320 f

autocracy, Socratic ideal of, 57 f

authority, in Scholasticism, 354 f

automaton, in Epicureans, 251

autonomy, in ego, in St. Augustine, 327

aversion, in part of soul, in Plato, 102

axiology, in St. Thomas, 425

axioms, and science, in Aristotle, 153

beatific vision, in St. Augustine, 316

beatitude, in this life, in Plato, 111

beautiful, and causality, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 350; and ethics, in Aristotle, 202 f; and the good, in Plato, 73, 85

becoming, Aristotle's solution of problem, 170; as first principle of all things, 19; problem of, 18 ff; problem of, and act and potency, 176

being, foundation of, in St. Albert, 397;

foundation of, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 347 ff; and good, in Plato, 70 f; original meaning of, for Aristotle, 161; Parmenides' concept of, 22; principles of, in St. Thomas, 416 ff; properties of, in St. Thomas, 413 ff; and reality, in St. Thomas, 411 f; as self-identical, 22; univocity of, in Scotus, 462 f; and value, in St. Thomas, 440

Bible, and philosophy, in Philo of Alexandria, 267 f

belief, Epicurean, 253; in Eriugena, 359; in Plato, 82

"*bellum omnium*," in Sophists, 45

body, and soul, in Plato, 99 f; in St. Augustine, 325 f; in St. Bonaventure, 394; in St. Thomas, 433 ff

Boundless, the, in Aristotle, 191; as first principle of being, 12

canonics, Epicurean logic, 246

caprice, and freedom, in Stoics, 242 f

*catalepsis*, and Stoic criterion of truth, 220 f

categories, in St. Thomas, 414 f

causality, in Anaxagoras, 39; for Epicureans, 250 f; and existence of God, 123 f, 193, 427 f; and intelligence, 124; in Plato, 89 ff; principle of, in Aristotle, 172 f; principle of, in St. Thomas, 421 f; in Pseudo-Areopagite, 350 f

cause, *see* efficient, final, formal, and material causes

cave, allegory of, in Plato, 87 f

certitude, *a priori*, 79; in ideal order, 79, 96 f; and sense perception, 77 f

chance, in Aristotle, 178 f; for Epicureans, 250 f; in Plato, 82

charity, and bliss, in St. Thomas, 444 f

*chorismos*, in Aristotle, 97; in Plato, 97, 105

Church, and State, in St. Thomas, 448

clarity, as criterion of truth, 220 f, 259 f

classes, ontology of, 349, 357

*coincidentia oppositorum*, logical, in Nicholas of Cusa, 489 f; ontological, in Nicholas of Cusa, 489

common nature, a faculty, in Aristotle, 184; in St. Thomas, 417, 435

commonwealth, in Aristotle, 212

community, of goods, 65; of ideas, 92, 115; will to, 208 f; of women, 65, 115, 209

*complicatio*, and divine mind, 488 f

compositum, substantial union, in St. Thomas, 434

conation, in man, 185; in psychology, 103; and virtue, 204; and will, in Stoics, 228

concept, and Abelard; and abstraction, 156 ff; Aristotle's notion of, 140 ff; and idea, in Plato, 92; and judgment, 144 f; and Stoics, 221 f

concord, in Stoicism, 237

concrecence, in St. Thomas, 405

conduct, of life, in Epicureans, 256, 257; in Plato, 108

conjecture, in Cusanus, 486; in Plato, 82

conscience, and freedom, 283; and law, 233, 446; and Logos, 304; and morality, 308, 441 f

consciousness, in Aristotle, 181 ff; in Democritus, 33; in Plato, 103 f; in St. Augustine, 314; in St. Thomas, 441 f; stream of, 327

*consensus communis*, 222, 301

consent, and freedom, in Abelard, 368 f; for Stoics, 240

constitutions, of States, in Aristotle, 213

contemplation, in Eckhart, 469; in the Fathers, 299; in Plato, 110 f; in St. Thomas, 410, 444; and wisdom, 373

contingency, in Aristotle, 194; and existence of God, 128 f, 427 f; and man, 305 f; in Plato, 89

continuum, and Cusanus, 481

contract, and the State, in Aristotle, 207; theory of, in Plato, 112

contradiction, principle of, in Aristotle, 145 ff; in Cusanus, 489 f; in Eckhart, 476; in St. Thomas, 407 f

contrition, and Stoics, 237

conviction, meaning of, for Sophists, 41; for Stoics, 221

cosmic law, in Stoics, 243

cosmic process, in St. Augustine, 322 f

cosmic reason, in Stoics, 241

cosmic soul, and creation, 122 ff; in Plato, 76; in Plotinus, 277

cosmogony, of Anaxagoras, 39 f; of Anaximander, 12 f; of Empedocles, 31; of Pythagoreans, 16 f

cosmological proof, for existence of God, 427

cosmology, of Plato, 121 ff

cosmos, in Anaximander, 12; and creation, in Plato, 94, 122, 123, 128; and God, 197; meaning of, for Pythagoreans, 7; origin of, in Orphics, 7; and Philo, 268; and Stoics, 226

creation, in Patristic philosophy, 302 f; in St. Augustine, 321 ff; in St. Thomas, 430

cynicism, and ethics, 235; and life, 223; origin of, in Aristhenes, 58; and Stoics, 217, 219 ff

Decalogue, precepts of, in Ockham, 478 f; in St. Thomas, 442; in Scotus, 459 f

*declinatio*, for Epicureans, 250, 252  
 deduction, in Aristotle, 147 f  
 definition, and Aristotle, 140 f; and Socrates, 51  
 deism, and Plato, 129 ff  
 Demiurge, in Cusanus, 494; in the Neo-Pythagoreans, 266; maker of visible world, in Plato, 122 f; in Plotinus, 275 f; in Scotus, 461  
 democracy, in Aristotle, 212; in Plato, 117 f; in St. Thomas, 448  
 demonstration, logical, in Aristotle, 149 ff  
*demonstratio propter quid*, 151  
*demonstratio quia*, 151  
 "Deny and bear," principle in Stoics, 236, 238  
 desire, in Aristotle, 185 f; in Cyrenaic School, 59 f; in Epicureans, 254 ff; in Plato, 102; in Socrates, 52 f  
 detachment, and Cynics, 58  
 determinism, and St. Augustine, 330 f; and Socrates, 54; and transmigration, in Plato, 108  
*diairesis*, 90, 91, 94, 142, 490  
 dialectics, in Plato, 89 ff; Platonic, and Aristotelian syllogism, 148 f  
 dianoetical virtues, *see* intellectual virtues  
 difference, in Aristotle, 141, 188; in Plato, 79 f; in Socrates, 50 f  
 differentiation, in St. Thomas, 406  
 dilemma, and science in Aristotle, 153  
 disagreement, of concepts, in Aristotle, 44  
 discipline, for Stoics, 236 f  
 dissolution, in Empedocles, 30  
 "distortions," of reasoning, in Stoics, 228  
 divisibility, and time, in St. Augustine, 324  
*docta ignorantia*, of Cusanus, 485 f; as an infinite way of knowing, 486; as mysticism, 487; as negative theology, 485; as Socratic awakening, 485  
 double truth, Siger of Brabant, 456  
 doubt, methodological, and Academy, 259; Pyrrhonic, 262  
*Doxa*, *see* opinion  
 dualism, in Aristotle, 183; and Neo-Pythagoreans, 266 f; in Parmenides, 23; in Plato, 96, 103, 105, 183; in Plotinus, 272 f; in Stoics, 219 f  
 duration, in St. Augustine, 323 f  
 duties, of citizens, in Aristotle, 209  
 duty, metaphysics of, in St. Augustine, 330; and Stoic ethics, 232  
 earth, element for Empedocles, 29; instrument of time, in Plato, 101; nature of, in Anaximander, 12  
 ecstasy, and Plotinus, 277, 332; and St. Bernard, 373  
 efficient cause, in Aristotle, 171 ff; in Eckhart, 475 f; in Plato, 93, 123; in Plotinus, 273; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 350 f; in St. Thomas, 408 f, 419 ff, 426 f; in Scotus, 463  
 ego, archetypal in Cusanus, 493; in Eckhart, 470; and ethics, in Aristotle, 231; in St. Augustine, 328; in St. Thomas, 443  
 eidetical cause, idea, in Plato, 93  
*eidola*, images, in Epicurus, 247 f  
*eidos*, *see* form  
 elements, in Democritus, 34; in Empedocles, 29; in Epicureans, 249; in human soul, 100; in Plato, 125  
 elenctic, and Aristotle, 140; and Chartres, 371; and Socrates, 48  
 emanation, non-pantheistic, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 348 f; of Plotinus, contrasted with Platonic participation, 274; of world from God, in Plotinus, 273 f  
 emotions, in Neo-Pythagoreans, 268; in soul, in Plato, 102; in Stoic doctrine, 227 ff; in teaching of St. Thomas, 444; and will, in Aristotle, 185 f  
*empireia*, *see* experiments  
 end, in being, 178; of creation, 34 f; and morality, 332 f; and purpose, 173; in St. Thomas, 421 f; in Stoics 225, 237  
*ens*, in St. Thomas, 414 f, 440  
*ens ab alio*, 89, 162, 416, 423, 428, 468  
*ens a se*, 89, 162, 416, 423, 428  
*ens et bonum convertuntur*, in St. Thomas, 440  
*ens in alio*, 89, 162, 416, 423  
*ens in se*, 162  
*ens intelligibile*, 412  
*ens mobile*, 406  
*ens perfectissimum*, God, in Aristotle, 195  
*ens quantum*, 406  
 entelechy, in Aristotle, 173 f, 179 ff; in Plato, 104; in St. Albert, 398; in St. Thomas, 440  
 entymeme, in Aristotle, 148  
 epagoge, induction, in Aristotle, 148, 154  
 epicheireme, syllogism, in Aristotle, 148  
*epoché*, as developed by the New Academy, 261; in Pyrrho, 262; suspension of judgment, 260 f  
 eristic, 24; syllogism, in Aristotle, 148; and Zeno, 271  
 eros, and moral good, in Plato, 68 f  
 essence, in Abelard, 366; and being, in Aristotle, 164 f; and concept, in Aristotle, 140; and existence, in St. Thomas, 420 f; and idea, in Plato, 85, 93; intuition of, 408 f; and knowledge, in Aristotle, 155 ff; knowledge of, in Cusanus, 486 f; and quiddity, in St. Thomas, 417 f; in St. Albert, 398; in

St. Anselm, 363; and truth, in Plato, 78 f

eternal law, in St. Augustine, 329 f

eternity, in Boethius, 343; in St. Augustine, 323; of the world, in St. Thomas, 431

ethical principle, for Stoics, 230 ff

ethics, and Abelard, 368 ff; in Aristotle, 198 ff; in Eckhart, 460 ff; of Epicureans, 253 ff; of Plato, 70 ff; in Plotinus, 277 f; in St. Augustine, 329 ff; in St. Thomas, 439 ff; of Stoics, 227 ff

eudaemonism, in Aristotle, 199; in Plato, 73 f; in St. Augustine, 332; in St. Thomas, 445; in Socrates, 52, 55 f; and Stoic ethics, 235 f

evil, and God, in Plato, 129 f; a privation, in Boethius, 345; problem of, in Boethius, 344 f; problem of, in Plato, 75 f

evolution, and creation, 324 f; and idea, in Plato, 93

excluded middle, principle of, 153

exemplar, in Boethius, 372; in Plato, 123; in St. Augustine, 348; in St. Thomas, 428, 443

exemplarism, in St. Bonaventure, 392; Thierry of Chartres, 372

exemplary causality, 350, 424, 428

existence of God, in Aristotle, 225 f, 267 f, 272 f, 282 f; in Plato, 127 f; in St. Albert, 398; in St. Anselm, 361 ff; in St. Augustine, 138 ff; in St. Bonaventure, 392 f; in St. Thomas, 420 f, 434 f, 438 f; in Scotus, 463

experiment, in Aristotle, 152; in Bacon, R., 186 f; in Plato, 86; in St. Albert, 398

*explicatio*, in Cusanus, 491; in Plato, 89

faculties of soul, in Aristotle, 184 ff; in St. Bonaventure, 393 f; in St. Thomas, 435 f; in Stoics, 227

faith, and knowledge, in Ockham, 478 f; in Patristic philosophy, 300 f; in St. Anselm, 361; in St. Thomas, 404 f; in Scotus, 457 ff

fate, in Boethius, 342; in Epicureans, 251 f; in Stoics, 225, 239 ff

fear, in Stoics, 229

final cause, in Anaxagoras, 39; in Aristotle, 179 f; in Plato, 71; in St. Thomas, 423 ff; in Stoics, 231

fire, element for Empedocles, 29; in Stoics, 223; symbol of becoming for Heraclitus, 19

first cause, *see* first principle

first matter, in Aristotle, 169 f

first philosophy, in Aristotle, 158

first principle, of Anaximenes, 13; becoming, 19; the boundless, 12; four elements as, 29 f; homoiomeries as, 37 f; number as, 16; of Thales, 10; unconditioned, in Plato, 88 ff, 128

first substance, for Aristotle, 161 ff

flux, and being, 18 f, 30 ff; and doctrine of ideas, 96; and St. Augustine, 314

form, in Aristotle, 165; in Avicebrol, 378 f; and being, in Aristotle, 160, 163, 165 f; in Boethius, 339, 341 f; and entelechy, 173 f; and genus, 141; in Grosseteste, 386 f; and idea, 93; in older Peripatetics, 214; and purpose, in Aristotle, 179 ff; in St. Albert, 398; in St. Augustine, 324 ff; in St. Bonaventure, 392 f; in St. Thomas, 417 ff, 433 f; in Socrates, 51; in Stoics, 220; substantial, 263; teleology of, in Plato, 71 f, 91

formal cause, in Aristotle, 166 f, 173 ff; in St. Thomas, 422 f

four elements, of Empedocles, as first principle, 29 f

freedom, in Aristotle, 185, 205 ff; in Boethius, 342; in Epicureans, 251 f; in Plato, 107 f, 116 f; and fate, for Stoics, 239 ff; in St. Augustine, 330; in St. Thomas, 443 ff

friendship, ideal of, in Epicureans, 257 f; in Plato, 64; in Pythagoreans, 15

genus, concept of, in Parmenides, 26; and definition, in Aristotle, 41; and form, in St. Augustine, 324 f; and idea, in Plato, 89 f; and the universal, in Aristotle, 165 f

God, dialectical way to, 128 f; essence of, in Patristic philosophy, 301 f; essence of, in Plato, 129; essence of, in St. Augustine, 320 ff; essence of, in St. Thomas, 428 ff; and evil, in Plato, 129 f; existence of, in Aristotle, 192 f, 318 ff; existence of, in Eckhart, 468; existence of, in Patristic philosophy, 301; existence of, in St. Anselm, 261 f; existence of, in St. Thomas, 426 ff; existence of, in Scotus, 463; as fullness of being, in Eckhart, 467 f; and man, in Plato, 130 f; nature of, in Aristotle, 194 ff; nature of, in Boethius, 338 f; nature of, in Cusanus, 490 f; nature of, in Eckhart, 466 f; nature of, in Eriugena, 358; nature of, in Grosseteste, 386 f; nature of, in Philo, 268; nature of, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 347; nature of, in St. Albert, 397; omnipotence of, in Ockham, 477 f; our knowledge of, in St. Bonaventure, 392; as the One, in Plotinus, 272 f; physical way to, in Plato, 127 f; and preservation of world, in St. Thomas, 430 f; proces-

sion of things from, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 340 f; as pure act, 177; as pure thought, in Eckhart, 466 f; return of world to, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 351; source of all things, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 347 f; Super-Being, in Plotinus, 272 f; as Unconditioned First Principle, in Plato, 89, 91 f; as Unmoved Mover, 159, 176 f, 192 f; will of, in Ockham, 478 f; will of, as principle of morality, 330

golden mean, in Aristotle, 202

good, in Boethius, 339 f; and community, in Aristotle, 198 ff; in Eckhart, 468 ff; in Epicurean doctrine, 254 f; God as, in Plato, 91, 129; idea of, in Plato, 85 ff, 89 f, 91 f; and New Academy, 216; One and God as, in Plotinus, 273 ff; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 348 ff; in St. Anselm, 362; in St. Augustine, 326, 329 ff; in St. Thomas, 440 ff; in Socrates, 52; in Stoics, 230 ff; subsistent, in Plato, 67 ff

grace, effects of, in Eckhart, 469 f

gradation, and God, St. Thomas, 429

grammar, and term, Stoics, 222

grave, body as, 15, 268

guilt, consciousness of, in Plato, 108

*habitus principiorum*, in Eckhart, 471 f; in St. Thomas, 441 f

*haecceitas*, in Scotus, 46 f

happiness, in Aristotle, 198 ff; in Boethius, 344 f; in Cyrenaics, 60; in Epicureans, 247 f; in Plato, 108 f; in St. Augustine, 331 ff; in St. Thomas, 444 f; in Socrates, 52; in Stoics, 255 ff

hate, elemental forces, in Empedocles, 30

hedonism, in Aristotle, 200 ff; in Cyrenaics, 59 f; in Epicureans, 253 f; in Plato, 72 ff; in Socrates, 52 f

hegemonicum, in Stoics, 228 f

henads, superessential numbers, in Neo-Platonists, 279

hierarchy, of being, in Pseudo-Dionysius, 349; of being, in St. Thomas, 415, 425; of value, in Aristotle, 180 f, 198 f; of value, in Eriugena, 357 f; of value, in Plato, 106

historicism, and the history of philosophy, viii

history of philosophy, as philosophy, vi f; as a historical science, v f; nature and value of, v ff

Holy Spirit, indwelling of, in Eckhart, 469 f

*homoiomeries*, as ultimate elements of reality, 37 f

*homo-mensura*, of Protagoras, 40, 43

honor, and eudaemonism, in Aristotle, 199

"horned" argument, of Megarians, 57

humanism, in Middle Ages, 285

humanitarianism, in Stoics, 233 f

human nature, and morality, in Aristotle, 199 ff

humility, and knowledge, in St. Bernard, 373

*hyle*, *see* matter

hylomorphic theory, in Aristotle, origin of, 165 ff; in St. Thomas, 417

hylozoism, nature of, 11

*hypokeimenon*, in Stoics, 223

hypothesis, in Aristotle, 149, 153 f; in Plato, 88, 93; in Plotinus, 273 ff

idea(s), contents and qualities of, 24 ff; doctrine of, and Aristotle, 157, 163; doctrine of, and Cusanus, 487 f; and Eckhart, 467 f; and Eriugena, 358; exemplary, in Patristic philosophy, 302 f, 315 f, 321; of good, in Plato, 70; of ideas, in Plato, 80 f; and material world, in Plato, 104, 121 ff; as numbers, in Plato, 94; and objects of knowledge, in Plato, 82 f; and Old Academy, 133; and older Peripatetics, 214; origin of doctrine of, 96; and Philo, 268; and Plotinus, 275 f; teleology of, in Plato, 71 f; theory of, in Plato, 76 ff; and St. Thomas, 406, 415 ff, 430; world of, in Plato, 71

idealism, and Abelard, 365; and Aristotle, 164; and Roger Bacon, 388; and Grosseteste, 386; and Plato, 75 f, 95 f; and Pythagoras, 74; and Stoics, 220

identity, philosophy of, 278 f, 350 f; principle of, in Aristotle, 145; principle of, in Parmenides, 22 f; principle of, and participation, 275; principle of, in Plato, 80, 97

idol(s), of Roger Bacon, 388

illumination, theory of, and St. Augustine, 315 f; theory of, and St. Bonaventure, 393; theory of, and St. Thomas, 405 f; theory of, various interpretations of, 316 ff

images, for Epicureans, 247; for Stoics, 219

immateriality of soul, *see* soul, immateriality of

immortality, in Aristotle, 186 f; and Orphics, 6 f; in Plato, 110 f; in Patristic philosophy, 307; in St. Augustine, 328 f; in St. Thomas, 433

imperative, categorical, of Kant, 441 f

imperatives, Stoic ethical, 243

*implicatio*, and world, in Plato, 89

impulses, Stoic teaching on, 227 ff

inclination, and Augustinian morality, 333 f; and Socratic ethics, 56

individuation, in Aristotle, 168 f; in Scotus, 461 f; in Siger of Brabant, 455; in St. Thomas, 417 f

induction, in Aristotle, 147 f, 422

indwelling of Holy Spirit, and Eckhart, 469

infinite, the, 192; absorption in, 493; in Eckhart, 463

*insensibilia*, in St. Thomas, 412

insight, moral, 204, 236 f, 255

instinct, in Aristotle, 185

instinctive soul, in Plato, 102 f

intellect, active and passive, 185 f; in Aristotle, 155 ff, 185; and freedom, in Boethius, 343; one for all men, 455; in St. Augustine, 317; in St. Thomas, 412 f, 435 f; *see also Nous, Reason*

intellectual virtues, in Aristotle, 204

intelligence, and creation, 121 f, 377

intelligible species, 340, 411, 475

intention, and ethics, in Abelard, 368 f

intention, and moral good, in Plato, 68

international law, *see law*

intuition, of essences and abstraction, 156 f; of God, in Cusanus, 487; of ideas, in Aristotle, 137; and knowledge, in St. Thomas, 407 ff, 444; sensory-intellectual, in Scotus, 461 f

intuitionism, in St. Augustine, 317

*ipsum esse subsistens*, God as, 428, 429, 430

judgment, in Aristotle, 143 ff; in Cusanus, 488; in Epicureans, 248 f; in Plato, 78; in St. Augustine, 317 f; in St. Thomas, 408 ff; in Stoics, 221 f

justice, and Abelard, 368 f; and Carneades, 260; and happiness, 74; meaning of, 60; in *Republic*, 116, 120 f; and Stoics, 234

*kalokagathia*, in Aristotle, 202

*kathetikon*, Stoic concept of, 231

*katorthoma*, Stoic concept of, 232 f

knowledge, and faith, in Patristic philosophy, 260 f; origin of, in St. Thomas, 405 ff; principles of, in Aristotle, 152 ff; principles of, in St. Thomas, 406 f; psychology of, in St. Thomas, 435 ff; and science, in Aristotle, 139 ff; source of, in Aristotle, 150 ff; source of, in Plato, 154; theory of, in Aristotle, 139 ff, 184 ff; theory of, in Cusanus, 485 ff; theory of, in Empedocles, 31 f; theory of, in Ockham, 475 ff; theory of, in Old Academy, 133; theory of, in Parmenides, 23; theory of, in Plato, 65, 67 ff; theory of, in St. Thomas, 404 ff; theory of, in Scotus, 461 f; theory of, in Socrates, 50 ff; theory of, in Stoics, 219 ff; theory of, in Thales, 11; theory of, in Zeno, 28; and virtue, in Plato, 67 f; and virtue, in Socrates, 53 ff

law, divine and natural, 232 f; eternal, 233 ff; eternal, in St. Augustine, 294; eternal, in St. Thomas, 441; and fate, 240 f; international, in St. Thomas, 449; properties of, in St. Thomas, 447; natural, in St. Thomas, 446; positive, 233; positive, in St. Thomas, 447; and sophistry, 43; source of, in St. Thomas, 445 f; and state, in St. Thomas, 445 ff "learned ignorance," in Cusanus, 485, 487, 488, 494

life, in Aristotle, 181 f; concept of, for Sophists, 42; happy, and Epicureans, 254 ff; philosophy of, 65; properties of, 233; in St. Thomas, 432 ff; and soul, in Plato, 103; virtuous, in Stoics, 229 f

limited, the, as first principle, 16

logic, Aristotelian, general character of, 139 f; of Epicureans, 246 ff; of Stoics, 219 ff

logical truth, in St. Augustine, 318

*logoi*, in St. Augustine, 324 f; in Neopythagoreans, 267; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 348

logos, in Aristotle, 145; and becoming, in Patristic philosophy, 304 f; as conceived by Heraclitus, 19 f; as foundational basis of being, in Plato, 90; and God, in Patristic philosophy, 303 f; as idea of ideas, in Philo, 268 f; and the world, in Patristic philosophy, 304

love, above contemplation, in Eckhart, 469; and ego, in St. Augustine, 331 f; elemental force, 30; and ethics, in Plato, 73; and knowledge, in St. Bernard, 373; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 350 f; and reason, in Scotus, 460

man, measure of all things, 60; nature of, for Aristotle, 184 f, 199; nature of, for Cusanus, 493 ff; nature of, in Patristic philosophy, 305; nature of, for Plato, 99 ff; nature of, for St. Augustine, 325 ff; nature of, for St. Thomas, 434 ff; nature of, for Socrates, 48; nature of, for Sophists, 43

manticism, Stoic, 242

material cause, in Aristotle, 166 ff, 169 ff; and knowledge, in St. Thomas, 408 f; in Plato, 93

materialism, in Cynics, 59; in Democritus, 32; in Epicurean philosophy, 247, 249; rejected by St. Augustine, 326; re-

jected by St. Thomas, 440; of Stoics, 223 f

mathematical number, in Plato, 95 f

mathematics, and Aristotle, 153; and Grosseteste, 386; and Plato, 84 ff, 115; and St. Augustine, 314; and St. Thomas, 407, 409

matter, as *apeiron*, 12; in Aristotle, 160, 165 f; in Avencebrol, 378 f; in Avicenna, 377; in Empedocles, 30; in Epicurean thought, 249 f; evil, 76; evil, for Neo-Pythagoreans, 268; first, in Aristotle, 169 f; first, in St. Bonaventure, 392 f; and individuation, in Aristotle, 168 f; in Milesian thought, 9; in Philo, 268; in Plato, 125 ff; in Plotinus, 277; pre-existent, 122, 125; in Pythagoras, 16; in St. Augustine, 322 ff; in St. Thomas, 417 f; in Stoic thought, 223 f

mean, golden, in Aristotle, 202 f

mechanism, in Democritus, 35; in Empedocles, 30; in Epicureans, 250; in Plato, 124

mediaeval philosophy, divisions of, 281; importance of, 285 f; specific attribute of, 281 f

mediate concursus, in St. Thomas, 423

memory, and knowledge, in St. Augustine, 320; in Plato, 127; in St. Thomas, 435

*mesotes*, golden mean, Aristotle, 202 f

metaphysics, for Abelard, 366; for Aristotle, 143, 158 ff, 165, 167, 177, 181 ff; and dialectics, in Plato, 90 f; and ethical problems, in Plato, 70; for Milesians, 9 f; and nature, in Anaximander, 11; for the Pythagoreans, 16; for St. Augustine, 324 f; for St. Thomas, 411 ff, 426; for Scotus, 459 f; for Stoics, 222; for Theophrastus, 213

metaxy, in Plato, 104

metempsychosis, in Pythagoreans, 14

methexis, *see* participation

method, scholastic, 353, 355 f, 364

middle beings, Neo-Pythagorean, 262 f

mind, as source of truth, in Plato, 78 f; as source of truth, in St. Augustine, 315

modality, and judgment, in Plato, 143, 147; in Scotus, 463

moderation, according to Epicureans, 257

modes, of syllogism, in Aristotle, 147

monarchy, in Aristotle, 212; in St. Thomas, 448; totalitarian or constitutional, in Plato, 119 ff

monism, of Arabians, 397; in Parmenides, 23; in Plato, 103; in Plotinus, 272 ff; in Thales, 11; in St. Thomas, 413

monopsychism, of Averroës, 377; of Siger of Brabant, 455

moral good, for Aristotle, 198 ff; for Plato, 67 ff; for Socrates, 52 ff

morality, in Abelard, 368 f; in Aristotle, 198 ff; in Plato, 313 ff; in St. Augustine, 329 ff; in St. Thomas, 440 ff; in Stoics, 231 f

moral order, in Aristotle, 200 f; in St. Augustine, 329 f; in St. Thomas, 441 ff; in Stoics, 239

motion, in Aristotle, 160, 163, 171 f, 181 f, 189 f, 192 f; in Democritus, 34; in the Eleatics, 18 f; in Heraclitus, 18; in Plato, 103, 105, 124; in St. Thomas, 406 f, 419 ff; Zeno's refutation of, 27

multiplicity, in Cusanus, 491; in Plato, 91 f; in Proclus, 279

*mundus intelligibilis*, in Plato, 84 ff

*mundus sensibilis*, in Plato, 85

mutability, and man, Patristics, 305

mysticism, in Cusanus, 493; in Eckhart, 464 ff; in Eriugena, 359; of mediaeval Scholastics, 373 ff; in St. Albert, 399; in Neo-Platonism, 265; in Plotinus, 277

myth, idea of, 5; and philosophy, 5 ff

names, universals, in St. Anselm, 365 f

*natura communis*, in Eckhart, 475; in St. Thomas, 417

*natura creans increata*, 358

*natura creata creans*, 358

*natura creata nec creans*, 358

*natura incorporea*, the universal, in Boethius, 340 f

natural good, morality, in St. Augustine, 331

"natural justice," in Sophistry, 44

natural law, and natural right, in St. Thomas, 446 f; in St. Augustine, 329 f; in Sophists, 44 f; in Stoic ethics, 232 ff

natural science, in later Middle Ages, 480

*natura nec creata nec creans*, 358

nature, in Anaximander, 11 ff; in Grosseteste, 306 f; human, as the moral principle, 198 ff; mechanistic, 35; in Middle Ages, 285; in Milesian thought, 9; in Old Academy, 133; in Plotinus, 276 f; in St. Augustine, 329 f; in St. Thomas, 417 ff; in Scotus, 461 ff; in Socrates, 52; in Sophist thought, 43 f; in Stoic thought, 225, 230 f, 241

necessity, and Boethius, 344; and freedom in St. Thomas, 443 f; in Plato, 123, 125; and Stoic freedom, 241 f

negative theology, in Patristic philosophy, 301; in Pseudo-Areopagite, 347

noetical proof for God, in St. Augustine, 320

nominalism, and Abelard, 365; and Cus-

anus, 486 f; and Eckhart, 475 ff; and Ockham, 475 f; and problem of universal, 365 f

nomos, *see* law

non-being, and becoming, 170; and knowledge, 127, 407; and truth, 77, 85; and variety, 91 f; wicked, 72

noological proof, for God, in St. Augustine, 318 f

notion, *see* idea, form, concept

nous, in Anaxagoras, 38; in Aristotle, 155, 185; and Platonic Demiurge, in Plotinus, 275; as source of motion in the universe, 39; in St. Thomas, 410; *see also* reason, intellect

number, and Cusanus, 484 f; as first principle, 16; and Grosseteste, 386 f; and ideas, in Plato, 94 f; superessential, and Proclus, 279; and Thierry of Chartres, 372

object(s), of knowledge, in Plato, 82, 84; in St. Thomas, 407 ff; and world of ideas, in Plato, 85 ff

obligations, of citizens, in Aristotle, 209

occasionalism, in Plato, 103

*oikeiosis*, Stoic concept of, 230 f, 235 f, 241, 332

Old Testament, and Greek Fathers, 291

oligarchy, in Aristotle, 212; in Plato, 117

omnipotence, of God, 477 f; of mind, 240

One, the, in Cusanus, 482, 484 f, 487 f; in Eckhart, 469; in Plato, 91, 95, 126; in Plotinus, 272 f, 275, 277; in Proclus, 279; in St. Thomas, 415 f

ontologism, in St. Augustine, 316

opinion, in Abelard, 368; in Epicureans, 248; in St. Augustine, 313 f; and sense knowledge, in Plato, 82; way of, in Parmenides, 26

order, in Ockham, 478 f; in St. Augustine, 334 f; in St. Thomas, 424 f; through creation, in Plato, 122; in world, Neo-Platonism, 282

ordinance, of reason, law as, in St. Thomas, 447

"original state," of Hobbes, 45

Orphics, and Pythagorean way of life, 15

*ousia*, *see* substance

panpsychism, in Plato, 125

pantheism, and Cusanus, 491 f; and Eckhart, 467 ff; and Eriugena, 358 f; and Plotinus, 247 ff; and Stoics, 223 f; in Thales, 11

parable of cave, Plato, 87 f

parallelism, in Plato, 103

paralogism, and Aristotle, 148; and Megerians, 57

parapositum, accidental union, in St. Thomas, 433

parousia, and Plato, 91, 93

participation, in Plato's theory of knowledge, 81; in St. Augustine, 321; theory of, and analogy, in St. Thomas, 414; theory of, in Boethius, 341; theory of, in Cusanus, 488; theory of, in Pseudo-Areopagite, 348, 350 f

particular(s) in Abelard, 367 f; in Anaxagoras, 38; and being, 161 f; in Boethius, 341 ff; in Eckhart, 476 f; in St. Augustine, 324; in St. Thomas, 408, 418 ff; in Scotus, 461

parts, and whole, in Aristotle, 165 ff

passion, freedom from, in Epicureans, 254; and happiness, in Plato, 108; in Plato, 73; in Stoics, 229, 238

passive intellect, in Aristotle, 185; in St. Thomas, 438

pedagogy, and dialectics, in Plato, 91

people, in society, in St. Augustine, 334 f

*peras*, principle of being, in Pythagoreans, 16, 17

perception, in Democritus, 33 f; sense, in Plato, 77, 79, 81, 133

perfection, degrees of, in Scotus, 463; idea of, in Eckhart, 468 f; in St. Thomas, 427 f, 440

person, defined, 345

phantasm(s), in Aristotle, 184; in St. Thomas, 407 f, 436 f; in Stoics, 222

phantasy, in St. Thomas, 435 f; in Stoics, 242

phenomenology, ethical, in St. Thomas, 441 f

Philosopher-kings, in Plato, 115 f

philosophy of value, in Plato, 72

Phronesis, *see* prudence

physics, of Epicureans, 249 ff; of the Stoics, 223 ff; *see also* nature

place, in Aristotle, 190; in Boethius, 342; in Plato, 126 f

pleasure, in Aristotle, 200 ff; and Cyrenaics, 60; for Epicureans, 255; and the good, 72 ff; in Plato, 72 ff; in Stoics, 229 f

pneuma, in philosophy, 269; in Stoic thought, 223, 227

polyhedron, in elements, in Plato, 125 f

positivism, moral, in Ockham, 478 f

possible intellect, *see* passive intellect

postulates, and sciences, in Aristotle, 153

potencies, *see* faculties

potency and act, in Aristotle, 174 ff; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 350 f; in St. Thomas, 419 f; solution to problem of becoming, 176

potentiality, and becoming, in Aristotle,

172; and becoming, in St. Thomas, 420 f; and God, 192 f, 195  
*praeconceptiones divinae*, in Eckhart, 470  
*praemotio physica*, in St. Thomas, 423  
 pragmatism, and truth, in Aristotle, 144  
 predicables, in St. Thomas, 414–415  
 predicaments, in St. Thomas, 414  
 predicate(s), and syllogism, in Stoics, 222 f  
 predication, and concept, 140; and judgment, 144 ff  
 pre-philosophical period, 5 ff  
 prescience, of God, in Boethius, 343  
 present, and time, in St. Augustine, 323 f  
 preservation, of the world, in St. Thomas, 430  
 pre-Socratic philosophy, 5 ff  
 pride, and happiness, Plato, 108  
 primary cause, in Thales, 10  
 primary principle, air for Anaximenes, 13; *apeiron*, for Anaximander, 12; in Empedocles, 49; in Heraclitus, 19; number, for Pythagoreans, 16  
 principle, in Aristotle, 159 f; of being, in Aristotle, 159 f; and number, in Plato, 96  
 privation, in Aristotle, 170  
 probability, and truth, in New Academy, 261  
 process, cosmic, in Boethius, 351; in St. Augustine, 322  
 proficiency, and moral good, in Socrates, 52  
 properties, and accidents, in Aristotle, 142 f; in Boethius, 342 f  
 providence, in Boethius, 342; in Plato, 123 f; in St. Thomas, 431; in Stoics, 224  
 prudence, for Aristotle, 152, 201 f; for Epicureans, 255 f; for Plato, 53, 73; for Stoics, 230, 236  
 psychologism, and truth, in Aristotle, 144  
 psychology, in Aristotle, 183, 186; in Older Peripatetics, 213; in St. Augustine, 325 ff; in St. Thomas, 431 ff; in Stoics, 229 f  
 punishment, and freedom, in Aristotle, 205 f  
 pure act, and God, in Aristotle, 176 f  
 purpose, *see* end

quadrivium, 352, 452  
 qualities, in Aristotle, 188; and atoms, in Democritus, 33; primary and secondary, 34  
 quiddity, *see* essence  
 quietism, and St. Augustine, 334  
*quod est*, in Boethius, 339; in St. Thomas, 421

*ratio*, as concept, in Stoics, 222; as idea, in Plato, 93; in St. Thomas, 405, 441 f  
 rationalism, and Aristotle, 152; and Ockham, 428; of Parmenides, 25; and Plato, 80, 82; and Socrates, 50  
*rationes seminales*, in St. Augustine, 324 f; in St. Bonaventure, 393  
 realism, and problem of the universals, 365  
 reality, Aristotle's concept of, 164 f, 169, 173; for Boethius, 339 f; and being, in Scotus, 462; for Epicureans, 248; and Old Academy, 133; and Older Peripatetics, 214; for Plotinus, 273 ff; for St. Augustine, 322 ff; in St. Thomas, 411 f, 425 f, 436; and world of ideas, in Plato, 84, 87  
 reason, in Aristotle, 185, 201 f; for Boethius, 342; in Cusanus, 489; and moral good, 53; in Patristic thought, 308; in Plato, 102, 110; in Pseudo-Dionysius, 348 f; in St. Thomas, 436, 445 f; in Scotus, 460; Stoic use of, 222 ff, 230 ff; and virtue, in Aristotle, 204 ff; *see also* Nous, Intellect  
 relativism, of Abelard, 370; of Cusanus, 486 ff; of Heraclitus, 20; refuted by Plato, 80; refuted by Socrates, 51; sceptical, 42 f  
 religion, allegorical interpretation of, in Philo, 268; and morality, in Plato, 131; and philosophy, in Eriugena, 359  
 reminiscence, and Aristotle, 137  
 renunciation, Fathers, 294; Stoics, 235  
 representation(s), genesis of knowledge, in St. Thomas, 436 f; and phantasm, in Aristotle, 184 f; of phantasy, in Epicurus, 248; and Stoics, 221 f  
*res cogitans*, and idea of Plato, 84  
 resignation, Stoic, 243  
 responsibility, individual, in Aristotle, 205 f; in Boethius, 345 f; in Stoics, 242  
 revelation, in the Fathers, 293; in St. Thomas, 405 f

scepticism, and Abelard, 366; and Cusanus, 487 f; and Eckhart, 476; and Middle Academy, 259; Pyrrhonic, 261 f; refuted by Socrates, 51; and St. Augustine, 311; and Sophists, 42 f  
 science, in Aristotle, 151 ff; in Roger Bacon, 387; natural, in Cusanus, 492; natural, in St. Albert, 399; in Older Peripatetics, 213; in Plato, 86 f; in St. Thomas, 405 ff  
 secondary cause(s), St. Thomas, 423  
 second matter, in Aristotle, 169 f; *see also* matter  
 second substance, in Aristotle, 164 f  
 self-consciousness, in St. Augustine, 327

self-movement, and God, in Aristotle, 192 f; and immortality, 111; and soul, in Aristotle, 187 f; and soul, in Plato, 103 f; and soul, in Plotinus, 227, 276; and soul, in St. Thomas, 432 f

seminal principles, in Plotinus, 276 f; in St. Augustine, 324 f; of Stoics, 225

sensation, in Aristotle, 154 f; Cusanus, 488; in Democritus, 33; in Plato, 77 f, 80 f; in St. Augustine, 314 f; in St. Thomas, 406

sense(s), in Aristotle, 154 f; in St. Bonaventure, 393; in Democritus, 34; in St. Thomas, 408 f; value, in Cusanus, 488 f; of value, in Eckhart, 471

sense perception, *see* sensation

sensualism, in Cynics, 58; in Epicureans, 247 f, 255 f; and ethics, in Plato, 72, 80; in Stoics, 219 ff

sentiment, and Stoics, 238

*Sic et non*, and Abelard, 364, 370

sight, and truth, in St. Augustine, 319 f

simplicity, and immortality, in Plato, 110

slavery, and tyranny, in Aristotle, 211; in Plato, 119

social being, man, in Aristotle, 237; in St. Thomas, 447

society, man, a member of, in Plato, 112

sociology, of St. Augustine, 326, 334 f; of St. Thomas, 447 f

Son of God, and ideas, in Eckhart, 467 f, 470

sophistry, meaning of, 41

soul, in Aristotle, 181 ff; and body, in Plato, 99 f; and body, in St. Augustine, 325 f; and body, in St. Bonaventure, 394; and body, in St. Thomas, 433 ff; as entelechy of body, 182 f; essence of, in Aristotle, 181 ff; essence of, in Plato, 101 ff; essence of, in Stoics, 227; existence of, in St. Thomas, 432; faculties of, in St. Thomas, 435; immateriality of, in St. Augustine, 327; immateriality of, in St. Thomas, 432; immortality of, in Aristotle, 187; immortality of, in Plato, 110 f; immortality of, in St. Augustine, 327 f; immortality of, in St. Thomas, 433; immortality of, in Stoics, 229 f; kinds of, for Aristotle, 184 ff; as medium between idea and sensible reality, in Plato, 104 f; nature of, in Cusanus, 488; nature of, in St. Bonaventure, 393 f; nature of, in St. Thomas, 432 ff; origin of, in Aristotle, 186 f; origin of, in Plato, 100 f; origin of, in St. Augustine, 328 f; origin of, in St. Thomas, 438 f; in Orphic doctrine, 6; in Patristic philosophy, 306 f; in Plotinus, 276 f; as principle of motion and life, in Plato, 103 f; in Pythagoreans, 15; in St. Augustine, 325 ff; substantiality of, in St. Albert, 397 f; substantiality of, in St. Augustine, 326 f; substantiality of, in St. Thomas, 432 ff; transmigration of, in Plato, 105 f; tripartite nature of, in Plato, 101 f; unity of, in Aristotle, 186

“soul guidance,” in Sophistry, 42

space, in Aristotle, 167; in Democritus, 34; in Epicureanism, 249; in Plato, 95, 126; in Plotinus, 276; in St. Augustine, 322; in St. Thomas, 412 ff

species, in Abelard, 365; in Aristotle, 161, 163 ff; in Eckhart, 475 f; and idea, in Plato, 89 ff, 94 f; in St. Thomas, 437

*species aeternae*, in St. Augustine, 318

*species expressa*, in St. Thomas, 438

*species impressa*, in St. Thomas, 437

*species intelligibilis*, in Aristotle, 155; in St. Thomas, 436 f

*species sensibilis*, in Aristotle, 155; in St. Thomas, 436

specific difference, in Aristotle, 142

spirit, in Cusanus, 484; God, in Aristotle, 194, 196; God, in St. Augustine, 320; soul, in Plato, 101; soul, in St. Augustine, 306

spirituality of soul, in Plato, 104; in St. Thomas, 433

state, basis for, in Plato, 120 f; classes, in Plato, 112 ff; components of, in Aristotle, 208 f; forms of, in Plato, 117 ff; kinds of, in Aristotle, 212 f; origin of, in Aristotle, 207 f; origin of, in Plato, 112; origin of, in St. Augustine, 334; origin of, in St. Thomas, 447 f; purpose of, in Aristotle, 206 f; purpose of, in St. Thomas, 448

subsistence, of God, in St. Thomas, 428 f; of soul, in St. Thomas, 433

substance, in Abelard, 365; in Aristotle, 160 ff; and being, in Aristotle, 160; and being, in Stoics, 223; in Boethius, 342; first, in Aristotle, 145 f; first, in St. Thomas, 416 f; and form, in Aristotle, 165 ff; in Parmenides, 26; in Plato, 183, 188; in St. Augustine, 365 ff; second, in Aristotle, 145 f; second, in St. Thomas, 417

*summum bonum*, in Alexander, 390 f; in Boethius, 339; in Plato, 89; in St. Anselm, 362; in St. Thomas, 424; in Socrates, 55

Super-Being, in Cusanus, 486; in Dionysius, 347; in Plotinus, 272

supremacy, in societies, in St. Thomas, 448

Supreme Cause, 347, 348, 358, 423

Supreme Good(ness), and Eckhart, 469; and Socrates, 55

Supreme Value, God, in Aristotle, 195  
 syllogism, Aristotelian and Platonic dia-  
 lectics, 148 f; in Aristotle, 146 ff; Stoic  
 development of, 222 f  
 synderesis, in Eckhart, 471; in St.  
 Thomas, 442 f  
 synkatathesis, consent, Stoics, 240  
 synolon, first substance, Aristotle, 168  
 synthesis, in Cusanus, 489; in Democritus, 38  
 synthetic apriori judgment, in St. Thomas, 410  
 technē, and end, 178; and moral good, in Socrates, 54; and science, in Aristotle, 152; and science, in St. Thomas, 424  
 teleology, in Aristotle, 71, 178 ff; in Plato, 71 f; in St. Thomas, 423 ff  
 tension, soul a vital, St. Augustine, 326  
 theodicy, of Boethius, 337; and evil, 76; of Plato, 129 ff; of St. Thomas, 426 ff  
 theogony, in Hesiod, 5; in Homer, 5; in Stoics, 225  
 theology, and metaphysics, in Plato, 159; negative, in Philo, 268; negative, in Plotinus, 273; negative, in Pseudo-Dionysius, 347; and St. Augustine, 292 ff; in St. Thomas, 405 ff, 412  
 theonomy, and ethics, in Aristotle, 202 f; in Ockham, 479; in St. Augustine, 330; in St. Thomas, 441  
 theory of knowledge, *see* knowledge, theory of  
 time, in Aristotle, 190 f; in Boethius, 343; and creation, in Patristic philosophy, 302 f; in St. Augustine, 323 f  
 timocracy, in Plato, 117  
 tradition, and philosophy, in St. Bonaventure, 392 f  
 transcendence of God, in Aristotle, 196; in Plato, 128 f; in Plotinus, 272 f; in St. Thomas, 431  
 transcendentals, in St. Thomas, 414  
 translations, of Aristotle, 380 ff  
 triads, in Proclus, 279  
 trivium, 352, 359, 452  
 truth(s), apriori, in Plato, 79; in St. Augustine, 313 ff; criterion of, for Epicureans, 248 f; criterion of, for Stoics, 220 f; essence of, in St. Augustine, 317 f; nature of, in St. Anselm, 363; nature of, for St. Augustine, 314; Plato's concept of, 76 ff; possibility of absolute, in St. Augustine, 313; in St. Augustine, 313 ff; source of, in Plato, 77 ff; source of, in St. Augustine, 314 ff  
 tyranny, in Aristotle, 212; in Plato, 118  
 ultimate cause, God, in Aristotle, 193

Unconditioned First Principle, *see* *Anhypotheton*  
 understanding, and moral good, in Socrates, 53; and truth, in St. Augustine, 315; and virtue, in Aristotle, 185 f  
 unity, of God, in Aristotle, 197; in knowledge, 315; of man, in St. Thomas, 434 ff; of soul, in Aristotle, 186 f; of soul, in Plato, 101 f; and variety, 91  
 universal(s), in Socrates, 50 f; problem of, in Abelard, 364 ff; problem of, in Boethius, 340 f; problem of, in Ockham, 475; problem of, in St. Albert, 397; problem of, in St. Thomas, 418 f; problem of, varied solutions to, 364 ff  
 universal consent, in Stoic philosophy, 222  
 universal reason, of Stoics, 233 f  
 universities, rise of mediaeval, 383 ff  
 Unlimited, the Pythagorean teaching on, 16  
 Unmoved Mover, in Aristotle, 188, 192 f  
 utilitarianism, and moral good, in Socrates, 52, 55 f  
 validity, eternal, 128; logical, 85  
 value, and Abelard, 368 f; absolute, in Plato, 129; and being, in St. Thomas, 440; and Cyrenaics, 59 f; and Epicureans, 257; and ethical problems, 67; hierarchy of, in Aristotle, 198 f; hierarchy of, in St. Thomas, 415; and moral good, in Socrates, 52 ff; and morality, in St. Thomas, 440 ff; and Pseudo-Dionysius, 348 ff; and St. Augustine, 326, 331 ff; and St. Bonaventure, 392 f; sense of, in Eckhart, 471  
 variety, of forms, in man, in St. Thomas, 434; in Plato, 91 f  
 vice, and virtue, in Aristotle, 202  
 vigor, Stoic, 236  
 virtue, in Aristotle, 203 ff; in Boethius, 344 f; in Crates, 59; and Cynics, 57 f; and Cyrenaics, 60; in Eckhart, 469; in Epicureans, 255 ff; in St. Augustine, 326; in St. Thomas, 440 ff; in Socrates, 51 ff; and Sophists, 41; in Stoics, 230 ff, 235 ff; and value, 199 f  
*vis aestimativa*, St. Thomas, 435  
 water, as archē for Thales, 10; element for Empedocles, 29  
 welfare morality, and eudaemonism, in Socrates, 55  
 whole, and parts, in Aristotle, 166 f  
 will, in Aristotle, 185 f, 205 ff; of God, in Eckhart, 477 ff; primacy of, in Scotus, 460; in St. Augustine, 331 f  
 will, freedom of, *see* freedom  
 wisdom, among Milesians, 10; for Aris-

totle, 152; and Christianity, 300 f; for Epicureans, 257 f; and moral good, in Socrates, 53 ff, 67 ff; for Philo, 82, 269 f; for Plotinus, 271; for St. Augustine, 332; for St. Thomas, 444; for the Sophists, 42; for Stoics, 239; and virtue, for Aristotle, 204 f; and world of ideas, 86

women, and property, in Plato, 114 f; and Roman law, 234

word, *see Logos*

world, in Aristotle, 166 f, 188 f; in Cusanus, 491; in Eckhart, 468; in Eriugena, 358; eternity of, 180, 189; formation of, in Anaxagoras, 39 f; for-  
mation of, in Anaximander, 12; forma-  
tion of, in Empedocles, 31; formation  
of, in Plotinus, 276; of ideas, in Plato,  
71 f; intelligible, 84 f; and men, in  
Plato, 83; origin of, in Homer and  
Hesiod, 5; and Patristic Logos, 304; in  
Pseudo-Dionysius, 347 f; in St. Augus-  
tine, 316; in St. Bonaventure, 392 f;  
in St. Thomas, 414 f, 424, 430 f; in  
Stoics, 224 f; visible, 121 ff

world mind, in Heraclitus, 20

world-reason, of Stoics, 224 f

world soul, and creation, 123, 128; and  
evil, in Plato, 76; and ideas, 104;  
qualities of, 101



























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